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# The medical school of Aghmacart, Queen's County

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CULLAHILL CASTLE, BUILT about 1425, and now an impressive ruin, is a lasting reminder of the political power and vigour of the Mac Giolla Phádraig dynasty. An equally enduring, if less spectacular, monument to their influence is a group of manuscripts associated with a medical school that flourished under their patronage in Aghmacart, a townland that lies about a mile to the west of Cullahill Castle. The school of Aghmacart, which was conducted by the Ó Conchubhair family, reached its acme during the period c. 1590–c. 1610.

The following account, drawing on the researches of Fr Paul Walsh (d. 1941), Winifred Wulff (d. 1946), Nessa Ní Shéaghdha (d. 1993), Ronald Black, and John Bannerman, summarises what is known of the school's origins and activities. In tracing the careers of four of its physicians, Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair (fl. 1581–1611), Risteard Ó Conchubhair (1561–1625), Donnchadh Albanach Ó Conchubhair (1571–1647), and Cathal Ó Duinnshléibhe (fl. 1592–1611), it also adds a handful of new material to the body of knowledge already available.<sup>1</sup>

## The school at Aghmacart, 1500–1586

Specific details regarding the foundation of the school are unavailable. It was almost certainly long established by 1500, the approximate date of writing of the earliest document associated with it, National Library of Ireland MS G 12, a vellum manuscript in which no place of writing is given, but which is an anthology of medical texts, the principal scribe of which was Giolla Pádraig Ó Conchubhair,

<sup>1</sup>Paul Walsh, 'Notes of two Irish medical scribes. I', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 5th Series 20 (1922) 113–22; a revised version of this seminal essay, entitled 'Scraps from an Irish scribe', *The Catholic bulletin and book review* 19 (1929) 730–46, is reprinted in idem, *Gleanings from Irish manuscripts* (2nd ed. with additions, Dublin 1933) 123–52; see also Pól Breathnach, 'Richard O Connor: Irish scribe', *The Irish Book Lover* 21 (1933) 52–3, 112. For manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy associated with the school (RIA MSS 439 (3 C 19), 449 (23 N 16), and 467 (23 N 29)), see Winifred Wulff and Kathleen Mulchrone, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy Fasciculus X* (Dublin 1933) 1167–73, 1191–4, and 1220–24, respectively. For those in the National Library of Ireland (G 12, G 453, G 455), see Nessa Ní Shéaghdha, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland Fasciculus I* (Dublin 1967) 93–100, and eadem, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland Fasciculus X* (Dublin 1987) 33–9, 41–5, respectively. For National Library of Scotland, Advocates' Library MS 73.1.22 (Gaelic MS CXVII), see n. 52 below. For Donnchadh Albanach Ó Conchubhair's connection with the Aghmacart school, see John Bannerman, *The Beaton's: a medical kindred in the classical Gaelic tradition* (Edinburgh 1986) 100–105.

grandfather of Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair, head of the school in 1590.<sup>2</sup> On the basis of his involvement in G 12, it is reasonable to assume that Giolla Pádraig was a physician, and if the Ó Conchubhair school was already located at Aghmacart, that it was there he was based.

Of the activities of Giolla Pádraig's son, and Donnchadh Óg's father, Donnchadh Liath Ó Conchubhair, no record has survived, other than notices of the date of his death in 1562; but it may be assumed that he too was a physician, and was attached to Aghmacart.<sup>3</sup> The career of a son of his, Conchubhar Ó Conchubhair, physician, of 'Croghanboy', in Upper Ossory, is likewise clouded in obscurity: referred to in a fiant, dated 30 June 1566, which contains a list of pardons issued to followers of 'Barnaby Fitz Patryk, baron of Upperossory' (d. 1575), Conchubhar is otherwise unknown.<sup>4</sup>

A clearer picture of the life of Conchubhar's brother, Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair, emerges from the extant sources. In May of 1581, having spent almost four months in prison, Brian Mac Giolla Phádraig, second Lord Baron of Upper Ossory, and his wife, Lady Jane, both liberated from Dublin Castle on account of illness, lodged in the city at the house of William Kelly, evidently the Dublin physician of that name; it was a condition of the sureties given for Lady Jane that she was 'not to quit the city without licence', and of those given for her husband that he was 'not to quit the said lodgings unless to walk in Master Launcelot Alford's garden to take the air'.<sup>5</sup> Brian's wife recovered from her

<sup>2</sup>Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue* 1, 93–100; as Ní Shéaghda notes, Giolla Pádraig was scribe of G 12, pp. 25–58, and it is in an anonymous addition to a previously incomplete colophon that his name occurs: 'gac aon leighfeas an leabhar tabradh bennachd ar anmuin an tí do scriobh e .i. Giolla Pádraig mhac Giolla na Naomh mhic Muiredhaigh í Chonchubhair' (G 12, p. 30b16–19). Digital images of G 12 are available at [www.isos.dias.ie](http://www.isos.dias.ie).

<sup>3</sup>Walsh, *Gleanings*, 154 (citing the obit, in which the year only is given, in TCD MS 1372 (H 4.31), p. 98); Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue* 1, 94 (citing the obit in RIA MS 996 (23 N 17)). Donnchadh Liath's obit in RIA MS 996, a medical manuscript, reads as follows (capitalisation in this, and in other manuscript quotations in this essay, is editorial): 'Anno Domini an bliadain testa Dondchadh Liath mac Gilla Pádraig meic Gilla na Naom .1562. 7 an ced feil Muire fothmuir adbath' (p. 121, lower margin); for a description of RIA MS 996, see Elizabeth FitzPatrick and Kathleen Mulchrone, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy* XXIII (Dublin 1940) 2837–43.

<sup>4</sup>*The Irish fiants of the Tudor sovereigns* I–IV (Blackrock 1994) II, § 897, where he is named as 'Conoghor m'Donoghe leigh, of Croghanboy, surgeon'; Walsh, *Gleanings*, 152 n. 59; cf. *ibid.*, 153–4.

<sup>5</sup>David B. Quinn (ed.), 'Calendar of the Irish Council book, 1 March 1581 to 1 July 1586', *Analecta Hibernica* 24 (1967) 91–180: 117 §§ 59, 60, respectively; for Kelly's (fl. 1570–97) profession, not cited in the recognizances, see *Irish fiants* II, §§ 3106, 3747. For Brian's career, and the events leading up to his imprisonment, see David Edwards, 'The MacGiollapadraig (Fitzpatrick) of Upper Ossory, 1532–1641', in Pádraig G. Lane and William Nolan (ed.), *Laois: history and society, interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin 1999) 327–75: 341–9; cf. David

illness, but he himself did not, and, later that year, in the prime of his life, aged about 46, he died 'at the house of William Kelly, Surgeon, in Dublin'.<sup>6</sup> On 5 September 1581, in William Kelly's house, Brian made his last will and testament in the presence of four men: 'Henry Burnell, of Castlecnock', gentleman, 'Laurence Delahyd of Meglare', gentleman, 'Wm. Kelly of Dublin', and 'Donaghe oge of Osserie surgen'.<sup>7</sup> This Ossory physician of unspecified surname, taken by Canon Carrigan to be a member of the well-known Mac Caisín medical family, is rather perhaps, especially in view of subsequent pre-eminence, to be identified with Donnchadh Óg (mac Donnchaidh Léith mhic Giolla Phádraig) Ó Conchubhair, who, by 1590 certainly, and probably several years prior to that, was official physician to Finghin Mac Giolla Phádraig (d. 1613), Brian's successor (1581) in the lordship of Upper Ossory.<sup>8</sup>

Almost five years later, in a fiant dated 16 March 1586, a 'Donogh oge m'Donogh Kyoghe, surgeon' is listed among followers of 'John oge Fitz Patrick, gent.' Taken again by Canon Carrigan to refer to a member of the Mac Caisín medical family ('Donogh oge M'Donogh Caech [M'Cashin]'), the name is interpreted by Fr Walsh as an early reference to Donnchadh Óg (mac Donnchaidh Léith mhic Giolla Phádraig) Ó Conchubhair.<sup>9</sup>

#### A school manuscript, 1590

It is in the schoolhouse at Aghmacart, on 6 March 1590, that Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair finally steps into clear view. On that day, Risteard Ó Conchubhair – a twenty-nine-year-old physician who was engaged at the time in transcribing

Edwards, 'Collaboration without Anglicisation: the MacGiollapadraig lordship and Tudor reform', in Patrick J. Duffy et al. (ed.), *Gaelic Ireland, c.1250–c.1650: land, lordship and settlement* (Dublin 2001) 77–97.

<sup>6</sup>William Carrigan, *The history and antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory* I–IV (Dublin 1905) I, introduction, 84. The date of Brian's death, given by Canon Carrigan as 11 September 1581, is given as 'early' November 1581 in Edwards, 'The MacGiollapadraigs', 349.

<sup>7</sup>Carrigan, *History and antiquities* I, introduction, 84–6, where the full text of Brian's will is given.

<sup>8</sup>Canon Carrigan was probably unaware of the existence of the Ó Conchubhair physicians; it was natural, then, that he should take 'Donaghe oge of Osserie surgen' to be a member of the well-known Mac Caisín family of hereditary physicians, an identification that has never been questioned since. A colophon in RIA MS 472 (23 M 36) citing Aodh Mac Caisín as an amanuensis to Tadhg Ó Cuinn (fl. 1400–1415), shows that the Mac Caisín kindred were already practising medicine in the early 15th century; cf. Wulff and Mulchrone, *Catalogue* X, 1234–5. There is record of more than half a dozen physicians of the name in the fiants of Elizabeth, during the period from 1566 to 1602: see *Irish fiants* II, §§ 897, 921, 2059, 4739; III, §§ 6551, 6733; Carrigan, *History and antiquities* II, 52–3; Bannerman, *Beatons*, 101–2. For Tadhg Mac Caisín, the Ossory physician for whom G 453 was written, and who was principal scribe of British Library MS Egerton 159, see nn. 78 and 81, below.

<sup>9</sup>*Irish fiants* II, § 4832; Carrigan, *History and antiquities* II, 52; Walsh, *Gleanings*, 152 n. 59, where the fiant name is recorded as 'Donoghe oge mac Donoghe Lyoghe, surgeon'; cf. *ibid.*, 153–4.

Cormac Mac Duinnshléibhe's (fl. c.1459) translation of the *Liber pronosticorum* (1295) of the French physician Bernard of Gordon (c.1258–c.1320), a task he had evidently begun a short time earlier – recorded his place of writing:

*It is I Risteard son of Muircheartach who has written it [i.e. the preceding text] in the company of my master and kinsman in the schoolhouse in Aghmacart on the 6th day of March. And upon my word, I am thirsty and hungry. 1590. ('Mesi Risderd mac Muircertaigh ros graph a bhfhochair mo magistir 7 mo brathar a ttech na sgoili a nAchadh Mhic Airt in .6. la do Mharta 7 dar mo vrethir sum iotmhar ocarac. 1590', RIA MS 439 (3 C 19), f. 254vbw–z.)<sup>10</sup>*

During the following weeks, Risteard continued transcription of the *Liber pronosticorum* (RIA MS 439, ff. 241ra1–288rbz), recording in the course of writing his presence in Cullahill, presumably in the castle there, and in Abbeyleix.<sup>11</sup> On 1 April he reached the end of the task, and in the colophon to the text, written at Aghmacart that day, he names the master of the school as Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair, and alludes to his official status as chief physician to Fíngin, third Lord Baron of Upper Ossory:

*Finis. I am Richard, son of Muircheartach, son of Taidhg . . . O Conchubhair, who by permission of God wrote this Prognostica of Bernardus, in the school of my kinsman and master, Donnchadh Og O Conchubhair, namely, the chief Master of Medicine of Mac Giollapadraig. And Achadh Mic Airt is my place of writing. And out of the book of Fearghus Mac Bheathadh it was transcribed. To-day is April the first, 1590. Jesus. Maria.<sup>12</sup> ('F.I.N.I.S. Misi Risderd mhac Muircertaigh mic Taidhg . . . Í Conchubair ro sgriobh in*

<sup>10</sup>An earlier signed note of the scribe's in this section of the manuscript is undated: 'Mar do críochnaigh Dia in chuid sin don lebur go gericnaighi in cuid ele dhe. Mesi Risderd mac Muircertaigh ro sgriobh .1590.', RIA MS 439, f. 248vby–z. Note that, for convenience of reference, in citations of folio sequences from this manuscript, its extensive 18th-century repairs, detailed in Wulff and Mulchrone, *Catalogue* X, 1167–73, are included here as though they were part of the original. For Bernard of Gordon and his works, see Luke Demaitre, *Doctor Bernard de Gordon: professor and practitioner* (Toronto 1980).

<sup>11</sup>(a) 'Mesi Risderd mhac Muircertaigh mic Taidhg, mhic Muircertaigh mhic Cathail do sgriobh in mhéid ata sgriobtha do Prognostica Bernard anisa leabhar so 7 go gericnaighi Dia in chuid ele de. In .16. do Mharta .1590.', RIA MS 439, f. 266va34–z; (b) 'Isin gCúlchoill dam anosa a bhfhocair Mic Gille Padraig .i. Fíngin mic Briain .1590.' (ibid., f. 272vay–z); (c) 'Anocht oidhchi Féla Muire na Sanuisi .i. in .25. la don Mharta .1590.' (ibid., f. 278va17–18); (d) 'Mesi Risderd Ua Conchubhair do sgriobh a Mainistir Laoigise' (ibid., f. 279vby). For Cullahill Castle, see Carrigan, *History and antiquities* I, introduction, facing 80, II, 230–3; P. David Sweetman et al., *Archaeological inventory of County Laois* (Dublin 1995) 114 § 954.

<sup>12</sup>Walsh, *Gleanings*, 143

Prognostica so Bernaird maildire toil Dé ar sgoil mo bhrathar 7 mo mhagistir .i. Donnch<ad> Óg Ua Conchubhair .i. priomh ollamh Mic G<i>lle Padraig re leges. Et Achadh Mic Airt mo log 7 á levar Ferghusa Mic Vethad ro sg<riobad>. In ced la don Abraon aniu. 1590. Iesus Mar<ia>', RIA MS 439, f. 288rb24–z.)<sup>13</sup>

RIA MS 439, of which Risteard himself was principal scribe, and which he was evidently writing for his own use, contains two further translations by Cormac Mac Duinnshléibhe of works by Bernard of Gordon: his *Lilium medicine* (1305) (RIA MS 439, ff. 1v–234v), and *De decem ingeniis curandorum morborum* (1299) (RIA MS 439, ff. 235–40). A fourth text in the manuscript, an undated translation by Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair of a short Latin text on *sahaphati*, a type of skin disease, will be discussed below.<sup>14</sup>

The longest text in the manuscript, the *Lilium medicine*, comprises seven books, which Risteard transcribed in the order 1–2, 4–7, 3, beginning Book 1 in Cullahill Castle, Fíngin Mac Giolla Phádraig's chief residence, on 7 May 1590, and completing Book 3 in Courtstown Castle, Co. Kilkenny, in the house of Oliver Grace, on 18 November 1590.<sup>15</sup>

Risteard's manuscript is permeated by the influence of his teacher and kinsman, Donnchadh Óg, whom he held in the highest regard, and to whom he was indebted for providing him with exemplars of texts. Thus, in his undated colophon to *De*

<sup>13</sup>Fearghus Mac Bheathadh, owner of the exemplar used by Risteard, is identified as Fergus Beaton of Ballenabe (fl. 1588) in Bannerman, *Beatons*, 14–15. As Risteard dates the *Liber pronosticorum* 16 March 1590 in f. 266vaz, and 1 April 1590 in f. 288rbz, it is clear that he was taking the year as beginning on 1 January.

<sup>14</sup>The four texts were evidently transcribed in the following order: (i) *Liber pronosticorum* (ff. 241r–288r) (for dating, see n. 11 above); (ii) *De decem ingeniis* (ff. 235–40); undated, and without scribal notes, it may have been written during the interval between completion of *Liber pronosticorum* (1 April 1590) and commencement of *Lilium medicine* (7 May 1590); (iii) *Lilium medicine* (ff. 1v–234v); written between 7 May 1590 and 18 November 1590 (see next note); (iv) 'De *sahaphati*' (ff. 288v–289v), undated but apparently after 18 November [1590], date of completion of Book 3 of *Lilium medicine*; cf. Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchadha, 'Téacs ó scoil leighis Achaidh Mhic Airt', *Ossory, Laois and Leinster* 1 (2004) 51 n. 7.

<sup>15</sup>For the place and date of commencement of the work, see Wulff, Mulchrone, *Catalogue* X, 1168.14–18 [= Walsh, *Gleanings*, 134.11–15]. The place of completion is recorded as follows in the colophon (RIA MS 439, ff. 116rb7–vbz, dated 18 November [1590]) to Book 3: '7 is a mBaile na Cúirti [marginal gloss: <.i. long>phort in Grásaigh] do críochnaighi in chuidsi don lebur .i. in treas partical 7 is deighinighi rosgriobadh é na in chuid ele don lebur .i. a fhochair in Grásaigh .i. Oiliver mac Roiberd mhic Seain mhic Oiliver .i. saoi tighisaigh 7 duine uasail', RIA MS 439, f. 116va26–32 [= Walsh, *Gleanings*, 127.28–128.1; Wulff and Mulchrone, *Catalogue* X, 1170.31–5]. For the Grace family of Courtstown, see Carrigan, *History and antiquities* III, 498–507; cf. Walsh, *Gleanings*, 148 n. 26; idem, 'Notes of two Irish medical scribes. I', 117 n. 5.

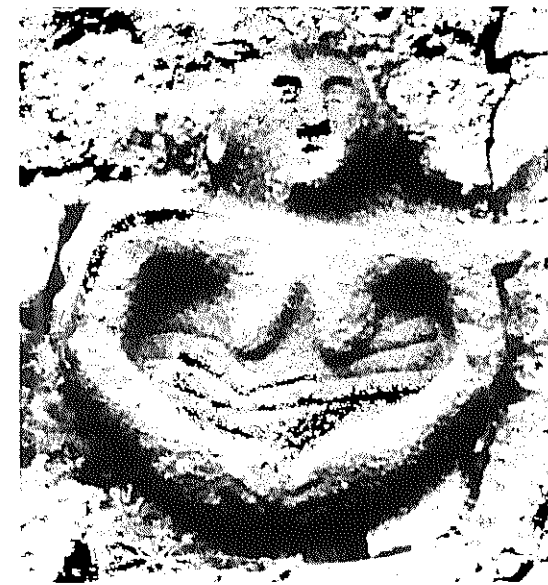
*decem ingeniis*, written at Grantstown Castle, Co. Laois, he tells us that it was from an exemplar written by Donnchadh Óg that he had transcribed the tract.<sup>16</sup>

Likewise, on completing Book 7 of the *Lilium medicine* in Pollardstown, Co. Kildare, on Friday 30 October 1590, he asked his readers to bestow a blessing on the souls of the author, Bernard of Gordon, the translator, 'Cormac Ua Duinnshlebbhi', and on Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair, scribe of the exemplar he had used, whom he described as 'chief physician of Ossory and the best of the doctors of Ireland in his own time – and that without leaving Ireland to study'. Risteard went on to assure his readers that any fault of transcription that occurred in his copy of the *Lilium medicine* was his own responsibility, and not that of Donnchadh's book.<sup>17</sup> Neither of the manuscripts of Donnchadh Óg's that constituted Risteard's exemplars has survived.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup>'Gurob mur sin do criochnaighidh sgríbad .10. nínntlecht leghes na ngalar arna tteglum go fíorghlan as an leabhar Ghaidhílgí 7 Laidne. A mBaili in Gronta dam a ttech Mic Gilli Padraig .i. Finghin mac Brian mic Briain mic Seain 7 a baincheli .i. ingen l Mhordha .i. Gilla Padraig mac Conuill mic Maoileachluinn. Go nderrna Dfa grasa ora sin 7 ar an tí ónar sgríbhadh in leabhar .i. Donnchadh Óg mac Donnchuidh Léith mic Gilli Padraig .i. Conchubhar. ar an tí ró sgríobh isin gcarta so e .i. Risdard mac Muirchertaigh mic Taidhg 7 an tí do chuir a nGaidhílg e .i. Cormac Ua Duinnshlebbe', RIA MS 439, f. 240v31–z (re-inked in later hand) [= Walsh, *Gleanings*, 141.8–21; Wulff and Mulchrone, *Catalogue* X, 1173.3–14]. It was at Grantstown Castle, too, that Risteard wrote the colophon to Book 4 of the *Lilium medicine* on an unspecified date in 1590: 'Explicit liber quartus cum auxilio Dei. Misi Risdard mac Muirchertaigh ro sgríobh 7 Baili in Gronta mo log a nOsráighi a vfochuir Mic Gilla Padraig .i. Finghin mac Briain mic Briain. 1590.', *ibid.*, f. 145vb18–23 [= Wulff and Mulchrone, *Catalogue* X, 1171.31–4]. For Grantstown Castle, see Carrigan, *History and antiquities* I, introduction, 70, and II, 63; Sweetman et al., *Archaeological inventory*, 115 § 958.

<sup>17</sup>'Gac nec leghfís aon chuid don leabur so tabradh a bhennacht maille re duthracht ar anmuin gac duine dhon druingsi aderun .i. Bernardus Gordonius .i. in tí do tracht in leabar so. 7 Cormac Ua Duinnshlebbhi do cuir a nGaidhílg e. 7 Donnchadh Óg Ua Conchubhair .i. ullamh Osráighi re leghes 7 rogha legh Erenn ina aimsir fen (tuig ríot gan dul a hÉirinn do dhenam foghluma) noch ler deghsgríbhha in cairt as ar thairrnges in leabhar so 7 innisim díbh go demhin cidhbe locht sgríbhneoirecht atá arin leabur so gurob me fen is ciontac ris 7 nac e leabhar Dhonnchaidh', RIA MS 439, f. 234va17–31 [= Walsh, *Gleanings*, 135.24–136.5; Wulff and Mulchrone, *Catalogue* X, 1171.z–1172.10]. As noted in Walsh, *Gleanings*, 151 n. 50, Friday 30 October is dated according to Old Style.

<sup>18</sup>Breathnach, 'Richard O Connor', 53, identifies as Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair the scribe of the following 'comórtas' and aphorism in TCD MS 1436 (E 4.1): 'Comortus andso re Diarmaid O Niallain 7 misi Donnchad Og qui sgríbcit / Omne habens partem in qua generatur habet partem' (TCD MS 1436, p. 217). Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair's hand has not been identified in any other source. Diarmaid Ó Nialláin is perhaps to be identified with the person of that name who is mentioned in a hitherto unnoticed sixteenth-century anonymous scribal note in RIA MS 997 (23 E 18), in a section of the manuscript that comprises a sixteenth-century medical palimpsest: '. . . 7 nac mait docim re so do sgríbad na do lenmain 7 mubeanvacht ar mu cuipanaibh croidhi ní hiad do beradh in díol so ar gluais Ipocraid .i. Murchada O Bolguidi 7 Gilla Padraig O Coileamain 7 Se[?] djan O Coileamhain 7 Seann O Icedha 7 Seann O Niallain 7 Tadhg O Niallain 7 Diarmaid O Niallain



'Síle na Gig' on Cullahill Castle

It is of interest that Risteard should have remarked on the exclusively Irish nature of Donnchadh Óg's training. Clearly, it had not hampered his academic advancement, and neither had it been any impediment to his securing the prestigious position of official physician to Upper Ossory. Yet, given that an Irish medical education was as highly rated as a continental one, the comment suggests that for many of Donnchadh Óg's contemporaries, and perhaps especially for those aspiring to the higher echelons of the profession, travelling abroad for study was a desirable, and feasible, option.<sup>19</sup>

### 'On sahapathi': a translation by Donnchadh Óg

The fourth and shortest text in Risteard's manuscript (RIA MS 439, ff. 288va11–289vb) comprises an unique copy of an undated translation into Irish, by

7 Maoileachlainn Og O Callanain 7 Gilla na Naoem O Callanain. Mait iat uile 7 bennacht orrtha' (*ibid.*, p. 168). For a pardon granted in 1601 to 'Dermot oge O Nelan, of Killy ny boye [Co. Clare], physician', see *Irish fiants* III, § 6562.

<sup>19</sup>Walsh, *Gleanings*, 139–40. Cf. Francis Shaw, 'Irish medical men and philosophers', in Brian Ó Cuív (ed.), *Seven centuries of Irish learning, 1000–1700* (2nd ed., Cork 1971) 75–86: 80; the two fifteenth-century university graduates referred to by Shaw, *ibid.*, are Tadhg Ó Cuinn (fl. 1400–1415), and Cormac Mac Duinnshléibhe (fl. c.1459); Brian Ó Cuív, 'The Irish language in the early modern period' in T.W.Moody et al. (ed.), *A new history of Ireland* III (Oxford 1976) 509–45: 518–20.

Donnchadh Óg, of a chapter on *sahaphati*, a type of skin disease characterized by pustules about the nose accompanied by redness of the face. Composed by the Portuguese physician, Valescus de Tarenta (fl. 1382–1418), the Latin text formed part of Book 7 of his *Practica*, first published in Spain in 1484. This translation of Donnchadh Óg's has been edited, with an English version, in the first volume of this journal.<sup>20</sup>

In his introduction to the translation (RIA MS 439, f. 288va1–10), Risteard, having first recorded the names of the author and translator, reported that Donnchadh Óg had directed him to transcribe the chapter on *sahaphati* immediately after Book 3.24 of the *Lilium medicine* (that is, immediately following the chapter 'De lentiginibus faciei'), but that since he had not remembered to write it into the manuscript at that point, he would write it immediately following this introduction.

It is in the context of the vibrant editorial activities of Irish medical scholars that Donnchadh Óg's instruction to Risteard to transcribe an extraneous chapter of text into the canonical *Lilium medicine* is best understood. As is well known, scholars here were actively involved, from at least 1350 onwards, in translating into Irish the rich, varied, and ever-growing Latin medical literature of continental Europe. Their translation enterprise was multi-faceted. Some translations are close and faithful renderings of Latin originals. In other cases, however, scholars chose to modify the original texts at the point of translation, omitting certain sections of the original, synopsising others, and, most interestingly, occasionally adding new material from extraneous sources. A recent study of the Irish translation of John of Gaddesden's *Rosa Anglica* has shown, for instance, that its anonymous translator/editor skilfully wove into the Irish version of the text material from no less than three other Latin treatises.<sup>21</sup>

Equally, as soon as they had been translated, major texts – such as the *Rosa Anglica* and *Lilium medicine* – embarked on a new and varied life amongst the medical fraternity of the schools. As well as being repeatedly copied in their entirety, undergoing differing degrees of scribal variation in the process, they were synopsised, they were excerpted, and passages from them were mingled with others from diverse sources to form new treatises. At some time during its period of transmission, a translation might also be revised, as happened in the case of Cormac Mac Duinnshléibhe's rendering of the *Lilium medicine*, a new recension of which

<sup>20</sup>Nic Dhonnchadha, 'Téacs ó scoil leighis', 50–75. The text breaks off incomplete with RIA MS 439, f. 289.

<sup>21</sup>Aoihneann Nic Dhonnchadha, 'Eagarthóir, téacs agus lámhscríbhinní: Winifred Wulff agus an *Rosa Anglica*', in Ruairí Ó hUiginn (ed.), *Oidhreacht na lámhscríbhinní Léachtaí Cholm Cille* 34 (Maigh Nuad 2004) 105–47.

was produced by an anonymous scholar about the middle of the sixteenth century, by which time the translation was already some hundred years old. This new recension, in its turn, received further modification in later years.<sup>22</sup> Medical texts were, then, like the human body they described, in a state of continual change: 'a claechlód chontinóideach'.<sup>23</sup>

From Risteard's introduction it would seem that Donnchadh Óg had specifically translated the chapter on *sahaphati* in order to have it interpolated into the *Lilium medicine*. In planning to enhance the work by adding to it a detailed account of a disease that Bernard of Gordon had not specifically dealt with, Donnchadh Óg was doubtless motivated by a desire to add to the usefulness of this much-consulted textbook, and, as we have seen, his remarkable textual initiative had the sanction of long-established scholarly practice.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup>The earliest dated extant copy of the new recension of the *Lilium medicine* is RIA MS 443 (24 P 14). It is the new recension that is found in the Aghmacart manuscripts, RIA MS 439, and Adv. 73.1.22. The earlier version occurs in, for instance, British Library MS Egerton 89, ff. 13ra1–192vb13.

The influence of Renaissance medical scholarship can be observed in the copy of the *Lilium medicine* in RIA MS 439, in which, in a number of instances, the version of the Aphorisms of Hippocrates cited by Bernard of Gordon has been replaced by the Greek-Latin version of Nicolaus Leoniceus (1428–1524), which was first published at Ferrara in 1509. Contrast, for instance, RIA MS 439, f. 160va9–13, with RIA MS 443, p. 231b12–15 [= Bernardus de Gordonio, *Practica Gordonii. Praxis omnibus medicine studiosis maxime utilis consummatissimi artium 7 medicine doctoris domini Bernardi de gordonio: medicine lilium nuncupata: que septem particulis distinguitur* . . . cunctisque mendis et erroribus expurgata (Venice 1521) [henceforth de Gordonio, *Lilium*], f. 64va–z (lib. 5.8, 'De fastidio et regimine sanitatis')].

Furthermore, aphorisms from Leoniceus's translation have occasionally been interpolated into the text of RIA MS 439. Thus, for instance, aphorisms VII.51 and VI.2 from his translation have been introduced into *Lilium medicine* Book 2.23 at RIA MS 439, ff. 85va2–12 and 85va26–32 respectively (contrast RIA MS 443, pp. 117b34 and 117b43, respectively [= de Gordonio, *Lilium*, ff. 32ra12 and 32ra20 (lib. 2.23, 'De sternutatione'), respectively]). A copy of Leoniceus's version of the Aphorisms of Hippocrates, with anonymous Irish translation, transcribed in 1592 for the Ossory physician, Tadhg Mac Caisín, is found in G 453, ff. 9ra1–43v9 (aphorisms VII.51 and VI.2 occur *ibid.*, ff. 43r1–6 and 37r5–7 respectively). Digital images of G 453 are available at [www.isos.dias.ie](http://www.isos.dias.ie).

<sup>23</sup>'Agus ar an adbur sin nī hinann slāinti moch-thráth 7 am easbairtín, óir atáit ar cuirp-ne a claechlód chontinóideach agā fuil slāinti nach inann 7 an chēd-shlāinti', Séamus Ó Ceithearnaigh, *Regimen na sláinte: Regimen sanitatis Magnini Mediolanensis I–III* (Baile Átha Cliath 1942, 1943, 1944), I, 9, ll. 225–9 (corresponds to: 'non est eadem sanitas mane et vespere: sunt enim corpora nostra in continua alternatione: et sic continue aliter se habent quam prius', *ibid.*, 112.18–21).

<sup>24</sup>Note that a passage on *piseoga* which occurs in Book 7.14 of the *Lilium medicine* in RIA MS 439 (ff. 222ra21–b19), and which does not occur in Bernard of Gordon's Latin text, has been edited by Winifred Wulff, 'Contra incantationes', *Ériu* 12 (1938) 250–53. Risteard Ó Conchubhair's marginal note signalling the passage's interpolated nature ('an sgríbhneoir ader so', f. 222r, inner margin) has been taken by Wulff as evidence that the interpolation was authored by Risteard himself. The same passage occurs, however, in *Lilium medicine* Book 7.14 in manuscripts of the work that are

### 'On stretching and yawning': a translation by Donnchadh Óg

An Irish translation of the chapter on stretching and yawning ('De alitatione et oscitatione') that is found in the *Collectorium* of the Italian physician and anatomist, Nicolaus Bertrucius (d. 1347), occurs uniquely in the Ossory manuscript, RIA MS 449.<sup>25</sup> In his colophon to the translation, the scribe, Cathal Ó Duinnshléibhe, records its author's name as 'Donatus Iuvenis', evidently Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair: 'Mercy on him who translated this into Irish, i.e. Donatus Iuvenis, on the 20th of June 1611'. This treatise, then, and that on *sahaphati* are the only known extant medical translations of Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair, and, indeed, the only known extant medical compositions from the lordship of Upper Ossory.<sup>26</sup>

In the course of the Latin text, Bertrucius counsels that three things are to be done in sequence in treating humoral disease: universal evacuation firstly (*euacuatio vniuersalis*), then particular evacuation (*euacuatio particularis siue propria*), and finally the application of local remedies (*remedia localia*). He illustrates this by explaining that in the case of headache caused by phlegm, phlegm is to be evacuated from the body as a whole first, then from the head itself by means of sternutatories, gargles, masticatories, and medicines for clearing the head; finally, local remedies, such as plasters and resolute ointments, are to be applied to the head.

A fourth method of treatment, that of 'diversion', is recommended in the Irish translation:

*To my knowledge, a fourth thing is to be added to these, namely, the diversion or drawing of the matter from the sick member or place towards another member that is far away from it, and that to be done by means of painful ligatures and by strong frictions and their likes. (Go n-iúl damhsa, is inchurtha in ceathrumha ní leó so, mur atā, iompódh nō tarruing an adhbhuir ón mball nō ón ionadh thinn chum baill eile vhiás a n-imchéin uadha, 7 sin do dhénúmh maille re ceangail ghortaightheacha 7 re coimioltuibh láidirí cona ccosmhaile, RIA MS 449, f. 123r11–13.)*

independent of Risteard's (e.g. NLS Adv. 73.1.22, ff. 214vb40–215ra22; Adv. 18.2.11, f. 129va27–b15; cf. Wulff and Mulchrone, *Catalogue* X, 1168.37–9). Thus, while RIA MS 439 is the earliest witness to the interpolation, it is not in it that the interpolation originated.

<sup>25</sup>RIA MS 449, ff. 122v–123r. It is hoped to publish an edition of this text in a future volume of

Ossory, Laois and Leinster.

<sup>26</sup>'Trocuire don tí do cuir so a nGháoidilg .i. Donatus Iuvenis an .20. Ia do Iunius. 1611.', RIA MS 449, f. 123rx–z.

The diversion or turning away of the course, or flux, of humours from one part of the body to another, by means of ligation and friction, or by other standard methods, such as ventosing (or cupping), phlebotomy, cautery, purgation, emetics, or diuretics, is often recommended in textbooks of university origin. Thus, for instance, in a chapter on the use of laxatives in health regimen, the physician Magninus of Milan (fl. 1326–36) explains that should a laxative evacuate more than it ought, and matter be likely therefore to flow towards the intestines from the other members of the body, frictions and baths are to be employed to divert the matter lest it move towards the intestines; diuretics sometimes avail too, and vomiting. All are employed in order to encourage the matter to move away from the intestines.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Bernard of Gordon in the *Lilium medicine* explains that although a haemorrhage and phlebotomy both weaken the body, yet, if the body's virtue be constant, phlebotomy can avail in the case of a flux of blood from the nose: it causes the flux to cease because it draws the blood to a contrary part.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, he explains that in almost all cases of abdominal flux, vomiting avails because it draws the matter to a contrary part.<sup>29</sup> Since the lines on diversion do not occur in the Latin text which Donnchadh Óg was translating, it seems likely that they are of his own authorship, and refer to a treatment of his own recommendation. As such, they are of particular interest, for, as is well known, Irish physicians rarely allude in their manuscripts to patients they have treated, and even more rarely to remedies they have dispensed.

An important part of Donnchadh Óg's teaching role, as *ollamh leighis* to Mac Giolla Phádraig, and head of the Aghmacart school, would have been the provision of authoritative translations of all kinds of Latin medical texts; and during the course of his long career he must have translated dozens of such texts into Irish. As one might expect from a scholar of his stature, both of his extant translations are knowledgeable and skilful, and they demonstrate the facility with which he was able to discharge that academic duty.

<sup>27</sup>'Amplius dico tertio quod est studendum in diuersione materie (verbigratia) possibile est quod materia ad intestina fluat ab omnibus membris et tunc fricationes & balnea multum competunt ad diuertendum materiam ne moueatur ad intestina. Et ex eadem ratione interdum competunt diueretica & interdum etiam competit vomitus. Hec omnia enim diuertunt materiam ab intestinis', Séamus Ó Ceithearnaigh, *Regimen na sláinte*, III, 335.13–21. For the Irish translation of this passage, see *ibid.*, 155, ll. 10600–608.

<sup>28</sup>'Quinto intelligendum quod licet fluxus sanguinis debilitet: 7 flobotomia debilitet. nihilominus potest in fluxu sanguinis narium flobotomia competere virtute constante: 7 facit cessare fluxum: quia trahit ad oppositum: 7 quia distrahit: ideo maius est iuuamentum', de Gordonio, *Lilium*, f. 44va17–20 (lib. 3.17, 'De fluxu sanguinis ex naribus').

<sup>29</sup>'Intelligendum primo quod fere in omni fluxu ventris valet vomitus nisi esset propter vlcera stomachi: quia ducit materiam ad oppositum', *ibid.*, f. 69va59–61 (lib. 5.16, 'De recapitulatione omnium fluxuum ventris').



# 'The magnates and other inhabitants of the country'<sup>30</sup>

As well as providing an insight into Risteard Ó Conchubhair's regard for Donnchadh Óg, and into the textual aspects of his profession, RIA MS 439 affords a glimpse of the social milieu in which learned physicians moved. On 18 November 1590, upon completion of Book 3 of the *Lilium medicine*, the last of the seven to be transcribed, Risteard wrote a remarkably extensive colophon in which he alluded to the circumstances of his life thus far, and the conditions under which he had transcribed the text. He noted firstly that none of his 'temporal lords' remained, a reference, apparently, to some dispossession from landed property incurred by his father or some of his immediate forebears. He noted further that his parents were dead, that he was himself unmarried and without a household; all he could do when he was tired in one place was to transport himself to another. Hence, it was in the houses of relatives and good friends that he had written the book.

Risteard went on to cite seven locations in Co. Kildare (Clonagh, Ballina, Carrick, Donore, Pollardstown, Allen, Dunmurry), and two in Co. Kilkenny (Ballyragget, Courtstown), that he had visited while writing the text, naming the couple, both husband and wife, with whom he had stayed in each instance. Further parts of the text were written in Ossory, in the company of Mac Giolla Phádraig and his physician Donnchadh Óg, and other parts in Cos Wexford, Carlow and Offaly. Having signed the colophon, Risteard prayed for himself and for each of the good and kindly couples whose hospitality he had enjoyed, and enjoined on his readers to do likewise. A roll of Queen Elizabeth of England's principal officials in Ireland, and a list of the earls of Ireland at that time, brings the colophon to its conclusion.<sup>31</sup>

In his edition of the colophons in RIA MS 439, Fr Walsh has investigated the history and genealogy of Risteard's hosts, and has shown that they were members of the 'native and Pale gentry of Leinster', and were invariably Irish-speaking and well-to-do.<sup>32</sup> Thus, for instance, the first-named couple to extend hospitality to Risteard in north-west Co. Kildare were Seon Óg Ailín of Cluain Each, and his

<sup>30</sup>The phrase occurs in a protection granted in February 1559/60 to a contemporary of Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair's, Dr James Nealan (d. 1599) of Co. Clare: 'Protection for master James Nealan, physician, and his servants and goods, in travelling, in consideration of his learning, and the daily need of his services by the magnates and other inhabitants of the country', *Irish fiants* II, § 215. (Quoted in Brian Ó Dálaigh, 'Doctors Donnell and James Neylon and the O'Briens of Thomond, 1530–1599', *The Other Clare* 15 (1991) 15–19; reference courtesy of Prof. Pádraig Ó Macháin.)

<sup>31</sup>RIA MS 439, f. 116rb7-vbz [= Walsh, *Gleanings*, 125.w–129.16; Wulff and Mulchrone, *Catalogue* X, 1169.26–1171.30].

<sup>32</sup>Walsh, *Gleanings*, 123–52.

wife, Mairghréag Dairsighe.<sup>33</sup> A son of John Lye of Ballina (d. 1584), Co. Kildare, Seon (*al.* John Alea) (d. 1612), had received a grant of Clonagh (par. Cadamstown, bar. Carbury), in 1571. Interpreter to the State over a long period of years, and the recipient of numerous grants of lands, in Co. Kildare and elsewhere, he is mentioned frequently in administrative records, his competence in Irish being referred to in a petition of 1587 as follows: 'Lye being an Englishman is very perfect in the Irish tongue'. One assumes that it was at the Castle of Clonagh, which he had built in 1578, that Seon and Mairghréag entertained Risteard. Its ruin was demolished about 1850, and its stones removed to build the Roman Catholic church at Kilshanroe, situated about a mile south-east of Clonagh.<sup>34</sup>

On leaving Clonagh, Risteard remained in the parish of Cadamstown, going on to visit An Calbhach Ó Mórdha (d. 1618), of Baile an Fheadha (Ballina), youngest son of Ruaidhrí Caoch Ó Mórdha, chief of Laois (d. 1545), and his wife, Mairghréag, who was of Norman descent, a daughter of Walter fitz Barnaby Scurlock (d. 1615) of Frayne, Co. Meath.<sup>35</sup> An Calbhach had been granted the manor of Ballina and adjacent lands in 1574, and he later received donations in the counties of Meath and Dublin. He is celebrated today as a former owner (1583) of the Book of Leinster.<sup>36</sup>

Among the relatives Risteard visited during the writing of the *Lilium medicine* was Gráinne, daughter of Brian Mac Giolla Phádraig (d. 1575), first Lord Baron of Upper Ossory, a half-sister to Fínghin, and wife of Edmund Butler (d. 1602), second Viscount Mountgarret, whose chief residence was at Ballyragget Castle, Co. Kilkenny. Related to Risteard through her mother, Elizabeth O'Connor, it was Gráinne who had been the principal provider for Risteard's education from the age of twelve years onwards, about the time that his father died. Since medical training

<sup>33</sup>'a thinnsnadh a gCluain Fheoruis a gCluain Each a vfhochair Sheoin Oig Ailín 7 a mhna .i. Mairghreg Dairsighi', RIA MS 439, f. 116rb17–20 [= Walsh, *Gleanings*, 126.9–11; Wulff, *Catalogue*, 1169.35–7].

<sup>34</sup>Walsh, *Gleanings*, 145, nn. 7–8; E[dward] O'Leary, 'John Lye, of Clonaugh, Co. Kildare', *Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society* 2 (1896–9) 133–50, 354–9; 3 (1899–1902) 39–50; idem, 'Additional notes on John Lye and Clonaugh', *Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society* 4 (1903–5) 173–5.

<sup>35</sup>'7 asin dam go B[a]ili in Fheadha. a vfhochair in Calbhuidh mhic Í Mhordha 7 a mhna .i. Mairghreg ingen in Sgúrlógaigh', RIA MS 439, f. 116rb20–23 [= Walsh, *Gleanings*, 126.12–14; Wulff and Mulchrone, *Catalogue* X, 1169.37–9].

<sup>36</sup>Walsh, *Gleanings*, 146, nn. 9–11; John O'Hanlon (ed. Edward O'Leary and Matthew Lalor), *History of the Queen's County* I–II (Dublin 1907, 1914) II, 753; Lord Walter Fitzgerald, 'Historical notes on the O'Mores and their territory of Leix, to the end of the sixteenth century', *Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society* 6 (1909–11) 1–88; 35–6; R. I. Best et al. (ed.), *The Book of Leinster formerly Leabar na Núachongbála* I–VI (Dublin 1954–83) I, xiii–xv.



in the Gaelic system began at an early age, it was presumably about that time too that he had begun his studies at Aghmacart.<sup>37</sup>

None of the people mentioned in Ristead's extensive list is said to have been a patient of his, but it is almost certainly the case that the round of visits recorded was primarily of a professional nature.<sup>38</sup> As a visiting physician, Ristead, would, of course, have participated in the provision of care for those who were ill in his host country, applying his learning to the diagnosis and prognosis of illness, to the regulation of diet, to the administration of purges to rid the body of unhealthy humours, to the employment of phlebotomy, and to the prescribing, preparation and application of appropriate medicines. In treating illness, his guiding principle would have been the conservation and strengthening of the body's natural power, for, as the *Lilium medicine* (Book 4.9) states, this is what cures disease: 'quia virtus est que curat morbos'.

Equally, because his training had taught him that the conservation and preservation of health were an essential part of a physician's role, those of his hosts who were hale and hearty would also have benefitted from his professional expertise. Understanding the impact that diet, environment, lifestyle and emotional well-being have on human health, medieval physicians monitored with attention the 'six non-naturals', a canonical list of six external factors that were regarded as decisively affecting health: air, food and drink, evacuation and repletion, sleep and

<sup>37</sup> 'As sin dam go Cundae Cille Coinnigh diomsaighi ar Vicunt Mhota Gairéd .i. Eamán mac Risdard mic Iarla Uirneumhan .i. Piarus. A ben .i. Grainne ingen Briain mic Briain mic Seán .i. Mac Gilla Padraig 7 inghen Í Concubair re hinghin Iarla Chilli Dara mathair na Grainne sin. 7 bainntigerna saoghalta 7 siur fhagus dam fen í [*<.i.> Grainne in margin, with caret marks in text*] do leth a matar 7 is í is mo tug médugad cum tighe sgoile dam fen o do sháirighis. 12. bhliadain dhaois 7 is a ttimcheall na haimsirí sin tesdaigh mhatair 7 is i máois anossa. 29. mbliadna go hOidhchi Nodlag so cughuinn', RIA MS 439, f. 116va13–26 [= Walsh, *Gleanings*, 127.15–27; Wulff and Mulchrone, *Catalogue X*, 1170.20–30]. On Grainne's political influence, see Edwards, 'The MacGiolla Padraigs', 351; for a poem addressed to her, see James Carney (ed.), *Poems on the Butlers of Ormond, Cahir, and Dunboyne (A.D. 1400–1650)* (Dublin 1945) 94–100, 146–9. On the length of duration of medical training, and the early age at which it commenced, see Bannerman, *Beatois*, 102.

<sup>38</sup> This lengthy passage is instructive in more ways than one. In the first place, it shows that the habits of the Irish doctors in the practice of their profession were similar to those of the bards. Besides being officially attached to particular families, they became itinerant at times, and sought for patronage over wide areas. In the case before us we find the doctor roaming over practically a whole province in search of employment. Note, too, the interesting fact that the gentry of Kildare must have been all Irish-speaking in 1590. Even the Englishman Ayle, newly settled in the county, adapts himself at once to the custom already prevailing among his neighbours. Further, the grateful tone of the scribe's references to those who befriended him on his journey points to the conclusion that an Irish chief or gentleman was no less generous to the men of healing than to the men of learning' (Walsh, 'Notes of two Irish medical scribes. I', 117–18).

wakefulness, activity and rest, and the emotions. Appropriate regulation of the non-naturals helped to ensure humoral balance, and therefore good complexion, and it was for this reason that advice as to their management, in health as in sickness, became an essential part of routine professional care.

The better the knowledge a physician had of a patient's complexion or temperament in health, the more informed and effective the treatment he might be able to offer him in illness. The inspection of urine for its colour, consistency, quantity, and content, was a standard method of determining a patient's complexional state, and was evidently as popular in Ireland as it was on the continent, for there survives in Irish a rich corpus of treatises on uroscopy, several of which were transcribed at Aghmacart.

Since health was deemed to arise from an appropriate balance, in quantity and quality, of the four humours in the body, regular prophylactic bloodletting (phlebotomy), designed to prevent an overabundance of humours from accumulating in the body, became a bulwark of preventive medicine, and those who availed of professional medical advice were willing to submit themselves to the procedure on the grounds that it would be effective in the maintenance of a balanced complexion, and thereby ensure good health. Required most by those of sanguine temperament, phlebotomy in health regimen was less needed by the choleric and phlegmatic, and least of all by melancholics. Among those for whom it was considered generally unsuitable were children under 14, adults over 70, pregnant women, and those of weak vigour; it was also to be avoided by convalescents as much as possible. The veins most commonly let were the three major veins of the arm ('na cuisleanna bis a fillead na láimhe'): the cephalic vein ('cuisle an chinn'), the median or cardiac vein ('cuisle an chraidhe') and the basilic or hepatic vein ('cuisle na n-ae'). While the health benefits of phlebotomy, done at the right time and in the right place, were highly praised, it might cause irreparable harm if undertaken under inappropriate conditions, and in practice this probably meant that those who could afford to do so had a physician perform the operation, or, at the very least, had it done under his supervision.<sup>39</sup> Cupping, a less severe means of drawing blood, was recommended as a substitute for phlebotomy in cases where the latter was unsuitable. It involved the scarification of the skin and the application to it of a ventose or cupping glass, the air in which had been rarefied by heat, the blood being drawn out by the vacuum created within the heated cup.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Ó Ceithearnaigh, *Regimen na sláinte* III, 108–35, ll. 9382–10125; Linda E. Voigts and Michael R. McVaugh, 'A Latin technical phlebotomy and its Middle English translation', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 74/2 (1984) 1–69: 5–6.

<sup>40</sup> Peter Murray Jones, *Medieval medical miniatures* (London 1984) 123–5; J. L. Turk and Elizabeth Allen, 'Bleeding and cupping', *Annals of the Royal College of Surgeons of England* 65

It is against this background, then, of physicians' active participation in health maintenance, as well as their skill in the treatment of illness, that the professional element in Risteard Ó Conchubhair's visits may be viewed. There is every reason to suppose that the gentry of late medieval Leinster, both Gaelic and Anglo-Norman, were just as interested in the conservation of their health as their counterparts in other countries. Among the wealthy and powerful in Ireland, as elsewhere, regard for medical learning was high, and one may be certain that Risteard's visit, affording as it did an opportunity to consult with a learned physician, who was attached to a prestigious centre of medical education, was particularly welcome.<sup>41</sup>

In his colophon to Book 3, Risteard recorded his age as twenty-nine (b. 24 December 1561; n. 37 above). A few details of his later career survive. On 7 June 1594, Eoghan Ó Beitheacháin, a member of what was evidently a family of physicians, writing in Ballybrittas, Co. Laois,<sup>42</sup> recorded that it was from an exemplar belonging to 'Risdeard mac Muircheartaigh' that he had transcribed the copy, now fragmentary, of the Irish translation of Valerius Cordus's (1515–44) *Dispensatorium* (1535) that is found in NLI MS G 414, pp. 181–473; the owner of Eoghan's exemplar is certainly to be identified with the principal scribe and owner of RIA MS 439.<sup>43</sup>

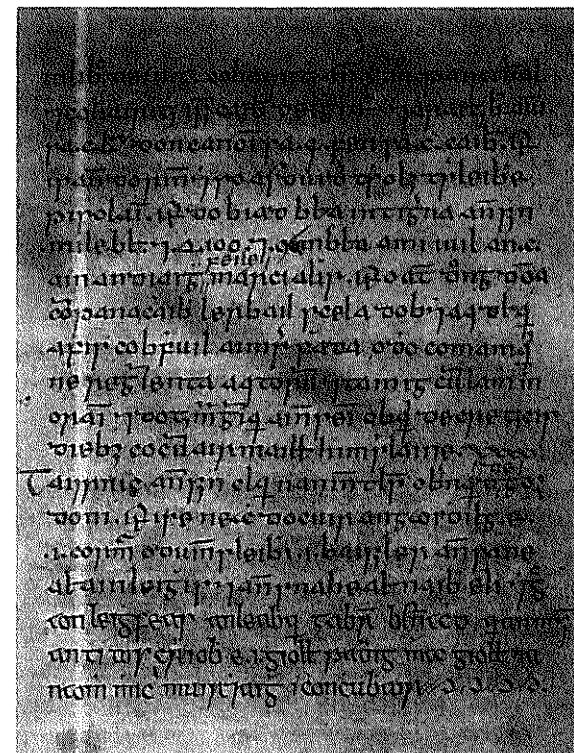
(1983) 128–31 (reference courtesy of Mary O'Doherty, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland); Ó Ceithearnaigh, *Regimen na sláinte* III, 136–41, ll. 10126–244.

For cupping undergone in Rome in 1615 by Aodh Ó Néill (d. 1616), who was then aged about 65, and was evidently an eager and enquiring patient ('Sixteen ounces of blood I took out of Tyrone's legs drawn by boxinge glasses, the which for the space of thirteen days he would have me come unto him, unto his bedstead, afore he will get out of his bed, to confer and talk with him, and to see how he did'), see Micheline Kerney Walsh, 'Destruction by Peace': *Hugh O'Neill after Kinsale* ([Armagh] 1986) 138–40. The frequency of the treatment described suggests that it was of a therapeutic, rather than a prophylactic, nature; on the basis of the patient's 'lusty' good health, and the siting of the boxing glasses at a point recognised as a substitute for bloodletting from the saphena (which may have been contraindicated on account of his age), it may be speculated that Ó Néill was being treated for a bout of podagra, perhaps caused by old wounds; cf. Ó Ceithearnaigh, *Regimen na sláinte* III, 138, ll. 10173–8 [corresponds to Latin text, *ibid.*, 317.24–318.9].

<sup>41</sup>For the nature of medieval learned medicine, and the role of the physician in society, see Nancy Siraisi, *Medieval and early Renaissance medicine: an introduction to knowledge and practice* (Chicago 1990) 48–77, 115–52; eadem, *Taddeo Alderotti and his pupils: two generations of Italian medical learning* (Princeton 1981) 96–146, 269–302; Michael R. McVaugh, *Medicine before the plague: practitioners and their patients in the Crown of Aragon, 1285–1345* (Cambridge 1993) 136–65.

<sup>42</sup>'a mBaile hI Dhiomusaigh .i. a mBaile Briotáis mo log sscríbhinn' (NLI MS G 414, p. 473.23–4).

<sup>43</sup>Nessa Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland IX* (Dublin 1986) 59–60. Digital images of G 414 are available at [www.isos.dias.ie](http://www.isos.dias.ie). Eoghan Ó Beitheacháin is evidently to be identified with 'Owen O Beaghan, of the Bracklo, same co. [sc. Queen's], chirurgeon', cited among the followers of Sir Terence O'Dempsey in a fiant of



Hand of Giolla Pádraig mhac Giolla na Naomh mhic Mhuireadhaigh Í Chonchubhair in NLI MS G 12, p. 30b (© Board of National Library of Ireland, reproduced by kind permission)

An anonymous and later addition to RIA MS 439 records Risteard's death as having occurred on 18 October 1625: he would have been in his sixty-fourth year then, and, being a physician, it seems fitting that he should have died on the feast of St Luke.<sup>44</sup>

1600 (*Irish fiants* III, § 6439); and with 'Owen O Beaghain, of Bracklain [i.e. Bracklone, par. Lea, bar. Portnahinch], same co. [sc. Queen's], yeoman', cited in a fiant of 1602 (*ibid.*, § 6666).

<sup>44</sup>Walsh, *Gleanings*, 144; Wulff and Mulchrone, *Catalogue* X, 1172.2–1173.2. For Risteard Ó Conchubhair's signature in the fifteenth-century manuscript, RIA MS 473 (23 F 19), see W. Wulff, 'De amore hereos', *Ériu* 11 (1932) 174–81: 174.22–7; eadem, Mulchrone, *Catalogue* X, 1236.4–5. For a note by him (addressed to Risteard Ó Beitheacháin) in TCD MS 1298 (H 2.7), p. 345, upper margin, and a note addressed to him (by an anonymous scribe), *ibid.*, p. 349, see Walsh, 'Richard O Connor', 53; idem, *Gleanings*, 152 n. 62. For his hand in G 455, p. 103.11–14, see Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue* X, 41, 42, 43. For citation of him ('Risderd mac Muirchertaigh') in RIA MS 451 (24 P 3), p. 241, in a colophon written in 1676, see Wulff and Mulchrone, *Catalogue* X, 1201.

Like Bernard of Gordon himself, Risteard seems to have been of a religious disposition, as evidenced by occasional prayers dispersed throughout his manuscript. Thus, for instance, in the course of transcribing the *Liber pronosticorum*, he wrote the following aphorism: 'From God come all things, prosperous and adverse'.<sup>45</sup> Having transcribed the *Lilium medicine*'s definition of *noli me tangere* (Book 1.19), a corrosive ulceration most commonly occurring about the nose and the eyes, he hoped he might himself never be afflicted by it: 'May mighty God protect me myself from the aforesaid disease, or from that accursed ulcer'.<sup>46</sup> Bothered by hip trouble in the course of writing Book 5 of the *Lilium medicine*, he invoked God to alleviate the pain: 'My hip joint is sore and may mighty God help me'.<sup>47</sup> Evidently under pressure to get the *Lilium medicine* finished – he was by now approaching the end of Book 3 – he worked on Sundays, and asked forgiveness for it: 'O God in heaven, do not punish me for all that I write every Sunday through excess of necessity'.<sup>48</sup> Notwithstanding his piety, however, his patience could be tried. Waiting for one Tadhg to come to Courtstown, he wrote: 'I am longing for you to come, Tadhg son of Giolla Mártan'. Several chapters later, he reproached the dilatory Tadhg as follows: 'My curse upon you, Tadhg son of Giolla Mártan, for staying so long in Kilkenny, and I having only a few comrades and companions in Courtstown'.<sup>49</sup>

One of the great treasures of Ossory medical learning, Risteard's manuscript awaits a full palaeographical and textual analysis in the light of modern scholarship. As Fr Walsh noted many years ago, the importance of its notes and colophons, which constitute the clearest record extant of the internal workings of an Irish medical school, is inestimable. They testify to the academic prowess of the school's master, Donnchadh Óg, to his acknowledged excellence as a physician, to the close relationship that existed between him and the school's patron, Fíngin, Lord Baron of Upper Ossory, to the care and diligence that he expended on writing and supervising the compilation of manuscripts, and to his proficiency in translating Latin medical texts into Irish. It is a picture, which for completeness, is unparalleled in Irish medical sources. The fortuitous survival of Risteard's manuscript has secured for Aghmacart, a leading centre of medical education in Ireland, and

for Donnchadh Óg, its master, a unique importance in the annals of Irish medical history.

### A Scottish physician at Aghmacart, 1596–1600

Descended from an eponymous ancestor who had migrated from Ireland about 1300, the Mac Beatha or Beaton kindred were the foremost medical family of Gaelic Scotland. As John Bannerman has shown, no less than seventy-six individual physicians of the name can be identified as practitioners there from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth.<sup>50</sup>

Of Irish origin too were the Ó Conchubhair physicians of Lorn, one of whose members, Donnchadh Albanach Ó Conchubhair (24.6.1571–13.2.1647), studied at Aghmacart during the years 1596–1600, compiling during his sojourn there the manuscript that is now National Library of Scotland Advocates' Library MS 73.1.22 (Gaelic MS CXVII), a volume whose scribal notes and colophons are an invaluable source of information on the Aghmacart school.<sup>51</sup>

Adv. 73.1.22, of which Donnchadh Albanach himself was principal scribe, and which he compiled for his own use, comprises three treatises, the first two being Cormac Mac Duinnshléibhe's translations of Bernard of Gordon's *Lilium medicine* (ff. 1ra1–224rb15; dated 1596, [1597], 1600) and *Liber pronosticorum* (ff. 225ra1–257vaz; dated 1596), and the third, a copy of the anonymous Irish version of the *Chirurgia* of the Italian surgeon, Petrus de Argellata (d. 1423) (ff. 259r1–329v; dated 1599); the final folios of the manuscript (ff. 330–331) comprise a fragmentary calendar.<sup>52</sup>

Donnchadh Albanach's copy of the *Lilium medicine*, begun some time prior to St Patrick's Day 1596, and finished on 30 May 1600, was evidently transcribed at Aghmacart for the most part, its seven books being completed, apparently, in the order 1–3, 5–7, 4. The work was compiled under the supervision of Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair, head of the school, whom Donnchadh Albanach mentions in the colophon to Book 2, dated 30 June 1596:

<sup>50</sup>Bannerman, *Beatons*, 81, 136–7.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 8, 65, 98–105, 144–9.

<sup>52</sup>Adv. 73.1.22 is described in Donald Mackinnon, *A descriptive catalogue of Gaelic manuscripts in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, and elsewhere in Scotland* (Edinburgh 1912) 273–7; John Mackechnie, *Catalogue of Gaelic manuscripts in selected libraries in Great Britain and Ireland I–II* (Boston 1973), I, 275–7. Adv. 73.1.22, together with Adv. 72.1.18 – a manuscript of ten leaves (ff. 1–10) that originally belonged between ff. 31 and 32 of Adv. 73.1.22 – are fully described in Ronald Black's typescript catalogue (henceforth Black, 'Catalogue') of the National Library's collection of classical Gaelic manuscripts; my thanks to him, and to the Library, for generously allowing me to consult this description, upon which the ensuing account of Adv. 73.1.22 (which I have consulted on microfilm only) is based; Ronald Black's identification of Cathal Ó Duinnshléibhe, collaborator of Donnchadh Albanach, with the anonymous scribe of RIA MS 449, has been particularly useful.

<sup>45</sup><A D>eo veniunt omnia, prospera 7 adversa', RIA MS 439, f. 244vaz.

<sup>46</sup>'Dia cumachtac dom dhíon féin ar an eslainntí rémhraíntí no arin gcrecht mallaighthi sin', RIA MS 439, f. 23vaz.

<sup>47</sup>'Is tinn ata ubhall mo leissi 7 Dia chumachtac dom chabhair', RIA MS 439, f. 152rbz.

<sup>48</sup>'A Dhé neimhi na hagair orm a sgríbhúim gaca Dómhnaigh re himurcaidh égentais', RIA MS 439, f. 114vby–z.

<sup>49</sup>'Is ro fada rium gan do thoighecht a Tháidhg mic Gilla Mhartan', RIA MS 439, f. 104rby–z (in Book 3.5); lacuna of several leaves between RIA MS 439, ff. 104 and 105; 'Mo mhallachtu ort a Thaidhg meic Gilla Mhartan ar fhad do comhnaidhi a gCild Choinnigh 7 me um uatha slóigh 7 sochaidhi a mBaili na Cuirt', RIA MS 439, f. 107rbz (in Book 3.16).

*There finished the second book, with God's help. And in the home of Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair it was written, for it is that Donnchadh Óg who gave this book to be written to Donnchadh Albanach Ó Conchubhair. Anno Domini 1596, on the last day of June. ('Tairnig annsin an .2<sup>a</sup> lebur maille re furtachd De. Et a mbaile Dhonnchaidh Oig I Conchubhair do sgribadh é oir is e an Donnchadh Og sin tug an lebur so rena sgribadh do Dhonnchadh Albannac O Conchubhair. Anno dom[i]ni 1596 .an. la dedhinac do mí luin', Adv. 73.1.22, f. 96va37-z.)<sup>53</sup>*

Donnchadh Albanach's principal collaborator in the writing of the *Lilium medicine* was Cathal Ó Duinnshléibhe, an accomplished scribe who transcribed parts of Books 2–7, and wrote the colophons to Books 3 and 4.<sup>54</sup> He identifies himself in the colophon to Book 3 of the text, which he wrote for Donnchadh Albanach at Aghmacart on 6 August 1596 in the company of Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair, at a time when Donnchadh Albanach was off in Kilkenny enjoying himself. Cathal records the names of two colleagues who were present at Aghmacart that day, namely Feargach Ó Fearghusa, and Iollann Máig Bheatha, members of two well-known Connaught medical families, who may have been either students at the school, or 'fully qualified physicians on circuit':<sup>55</sup>

*There finished the third particle of the Lilium by Donnchadh Albanach Ó Conchubhair, with the help of the Saviour, on the 6th of August in*

<sup>53</sup>The following are the folio references in Adv. 73.1.22 for the seven books of the *Lilium medicine*, together with a summary of dates and locations quoted in them (dates in square brackets are conjectured): 1, ff. 1ra1–51rb21 (dated 'la feil Padraig' [1596], f. 18rb23; 'An niudh dham a mBaile Cuad', f. 47vb14); for Adv. 72.1.18, originally a part of Adv. 73.1.22, see previous note; 2, 51rb22–96vaz (12 June 1596, 'a mBaile Cuthad', in note at f. 84vax–z (see next note); 30 June 1596, 'a mbaile Dhonnchaidh Oig I Conchubhair do sgribadh é', in colophon at f. 96va37–z); 3, 96vb1–122rbz (6 August 1596, 'a nAcadh Mhic Airt a bharradh Donnchaidh Oig Í Concubuir', in colophon at f. 122rb36–z; 4, 122va1–132va11; remainder of 132v blank; text resumes without break, f. 133ra1, continuing to f. 149rb19; remainder of f. 149v blank (30 May 1600, 'A gCulchoill Mic Gilla Padraig', in colophon at f. 149rb16–19); 5, 149vb1–185vb16 (11 November 1596, 'an Acthach Meic Art tinnsgnaighe é 7 is ann do tarnig se', in colophon at f. 185vb7–16); 6, 185vb17–204rb30 (n.d., n.p.); 7, 204rb31–224rb15 (10 February [1597], 'a nAthchúth Mhic Airt dham a faradh Dhonnchaidh Oig I Concubhar', in colophon at f. 224rb1–15; an immediately following, and contemporaneous, note in the hand of Niall Mac Iomhair (f. 224rb16–34), written, obviously, prior to 25 March, is dated 'Anno Dom[i]ni .1596.': see n. 72 below).

<sup>54</sup>Cathal's first stint in Adv. 73.1.22 occurs on f. 60va17–z. He was, therefore, engaged in the collaboration prior to 12 June 1596 when Donnchadh Albanach wrote the following note in f. 84 of the manuscript: 'Anocht dham a mBaile Cuthad a bhfhocair Dhiarraid an Bhealaigh an .12. la do mhí Iunius 7 is ann ata an baile sin eder teora Mhuighneach 7 Laithneach. Anno Domini 1596. Misi Donnchadh', Adv. 73.1.22, f. 84vax–z. Cathal's earliest address to Donnchadh Albanach ('Sin duit a Dhonnchaidh Albanaigh maille re bennachain') occurs *ibid.*, f. 89vaz.

<sup>55</sup>Bannerman, *Beatons*, 104.

*Aghmacart in the company of Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair. Anno Domini 1596. That is for you, Donnchadh, with a blessing; and you care about nothing at all now (?) for you are filling your belly in Kilkenny, and you have little regard for us, all you have left behind you. That is enough. But may God have mercy upon us the company who was there, i.e. Donnchadh Albanach and Iollann Máig Bheatha and Feargach Ó Ferghusa and I, Cathal Ó Duinnshléibhe. ('Tairnig annsin an .3. partigal don Lili le Donnchadh Albunach Ó Concubuir maille re furtacht in tShlanaightéora an .6. lá dAuguis[t] a nAcadh Mhic Airt a bharradh Donnchaidh Oig Í Concubuir. Anno Domini .1596. Sin duit a Dhonnchaidh maille re bennacht 7 is cuma let créd air in bpic ponuire anois oir ataí ag lionadh do bhrudh a gCill Coinnigh 7 ní mor in benn ata agad oruinni an médi so dfhágubuis tar héis [acht expuncted] ní bec sin acht co ndenadh Dia trocuiri oruinn an bhuidhen do bhí annsin .i. Donnchadh Albunac 7 Iollann Máigbheatha 7 Fergach O Ferghusa 7 misi Catal Ó Duinnshleibhe', Adv. 73.1.22, f. 122rb36–z.)<sup>56</sup>*

Among the anonymous scribes who assisted Donnchadh Albanach in transcribing the *Lilium medicine*, was Giolla Pádraig, a son of Donnchadh Óg's, who bore the same forename as his great-grandfather, the Ó Conchubhair scribe of G 12. In his colophon to Book 5 of the *Lilium medicine*, written in Aghmacart on the night of 11 November 1596, Donnchadh Albanach alludes to Giolla Pádraig as scribe of the immediately preceding text, and mentions those who were present in Aghmacart at that time:

*There finished the fifth particle, by the grace of God, on the 11th of November. And in Aghmacart it was begun, and it is there it finished. And it is he who wrote this preceding part of it [i.e. f. 185va8–b6], namely, Giolla Pádraig, son of Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair. And Niall Mac Iomhair and Iollann and Tadhg and Domhnall were present at that time, and we were afraid of some of the race of Cashin who were among the outlaw band. And Cathal is not at home tonight. Anno Domini 1596. I am Donnchadh Ó Conchubhair. ('Tairnig annsin an .5. pairtegal maille re grasaibh Dhé an .11. la do mí Nouember 7 an Acthach Meic Art tinnsgnaighe é 7 is ann do tarnig se 7 is e do sgrib an cuid so fuas de [= f. 185va8–b6] .i. Giolla Patrig mac Donnchaidh Oig I Concubair 7 do bhi Níall Mac Iomhur 7 Iollann 7 Tadhg 7 Domnall do lathair an uair sin 7 do bhí eagal orinn roimh chuid do Chineadh Chaissin do bhi ar*

<sup>56</sup>In alluding here to Donnchadh Albanach filling his belly, Cathal may be humourously echoing an undated line-filler of Donnchadh Albanach's in a preceding folio: 'Ata mo bru folamh', Adv. 73.1.22, f. 115rbz.

an geetairne coille 7 ní bhfuil Cathall annsa mbaile annocht. Anno Domini. 1596. Misi Donnchadh Ó Conchubhair', Adv. 73.1.22, f. 185vb7-16.)

Some six years earlier, in RIA MS 439, Giolla Pádraig had been the recipient of a note of gratitude from Risteard Ó Conchubhair for an unspecified favour he had done for him: 'Thank you Giolla Pádraig, son of Donnchadh Óg; you helped me well, unlike Cathal *bacach*'.<sup>57</sup> Giolla Pádraig of this note, and of Donnchadh Albanach's colophon, is evidently to be identified with the 'Patrick McDonogh Oge O'Connor', who was among the native grantees in the plantation of Upper Ossory (1626-32), receiving 1,246 acres in the settlement.<sup>58</sup> Since it is known that Niall Mac Iomhair, who was apparently from Scotland, transcribed a portion of Donnchadh Albanach's copy of the *Chirurgia* of Petrus de Argellata some time after that text's commencement on 14 January 1599 (see below), it would seem that he too, like his colleague and fellow-countryman, Donnchadh Albanach, spent a couple of years at Aghmacart. As to Iollann – evidently Iollann Máig Bheatha mentioned previously in the colophon to Book 3 – Tadhg and Domhnall, one assumes that their hands, anonymous and unidentified, are extant in Donnchadh Albanach's manuscript.<sup>59</sup> Of the involvement of some of the Cashin kindred in an 'outlaw band', nothing further is known. Some months later, however (see below), this same kindred is recorded by Niall Mac Iomhair as being engaged in a struggle with Donnchadh Ó Conchubhair for the office of official physician to Fínghein Mac Giolla Phádraig.<sup>60</sup>

The help he received from his Aghmacart colleagues in transcribing the *Lilium medicine* was duly acknowledged by a grateful Donnchadh Albanach, who in his colophon to Book 7, written at Aghmacart in the company of Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair, on 10 February 1597, thanked everyone who had assisted him with the book to date, in particular Cathal son of Conn, that is Cathal Ó Duinnshléibhe, who had written much for him:

*There finished the seventh particle of the Lilium, by the will of God, on the 10th of February. And I am in Aghmacart in the company of Donnchadh Óg*

<sup>57</sup>'Go raibh mait agad a Gilli Padraig mic Donnchaidh Oig, is mait do cabhraighis mé ní hionann is Cathal baccac', RIA MS 439, f. 171rbz. As Giolla Pádraig's hand does not appear in RIA MS 439, it was not for help with transcription in that manuscript that he was being thanked. Cathal is perhaps to be identified with Cathal Ó Conchubhair, mentioned in Donnchadh Albanach's colophon of 9 October 1596, and may have been a brother of Giolla Pádraig.

<sup>58</sup>For the plantation of Upper Ossory and its aftermath, see Edwards, 'The MacGiollapadraig', 361-9; 'Patrick McDonogh Oge O'Connor', described by Edwards as 'hereditary physician', is listed, with his acreage, in the table of plantation grantees (1626-32), *ibid.*, 364-5.

<sup>59</sup>Mac Iomhair's Scottish origin, and the identification and extent of his hand, are discussed in Black, 'Catalogue'.

<sup>60</sup>Bannerman, *Beatons*, 101-2.

*Ó Conchubhair. For it is he who gave me this book to write. And thanks to al who gave me help or assistance in this book, and particularly to Cathal son of Conn, for it is much he wrote for me. ('Tairnig <ann sin an .7.> particlun don Lili mailli re to<il> Dé an .10. la do mhi Februaireis 7 a nAthchith Mhic Airt dham a faradh Dhonnchaidh Oig I Conchubhar. oir is e tuc dhamsa an leabhar so rena sgriobadh 7 go roimhe mait ag gac aon duine da dtug cabhuir no conadh dham fan lebur so 7 go hairidhi ag Cathall mac Cuinn. oir is moi do sgriobh se dham', Adv. 73.1.22, f. 224rb1-9.)*

It was to Cathal it fell, just over three years later, to pen the colophon to Book 4 of Donnchadh Albanach's copy of the *Lilium medicine*, apparently the last of the seven sections of the work to be transcribed.<sup>61</sup> This he did on 30 May 1600 in Cullahill, presumably in the castle there, in the company of Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair, Cathal's colophon being the latest-dated Ossory entry in Donnchadh Albanach's manuscript:

*There finished the fourth book, by the will of God, by Donnchadh Ó Conchubhair. Anno Domini 1600, on the 30th of May. I am in Mac Giolla Phádraig's Cullahill now in the company of Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair. ('Tairnig ann sin an .4. lebur do thoil Dé ro [sic] Donnchadh Ó Conchubhair. Anno Domini .1600. in .30. la do Maius. A gCulchoill Mic Gilla Padraig dhamh in tansa a bhochuir Dhonnchaidh Oig hÍ Chonchubhair', Adv. 73.1.22, f. 149b16-19.)*

The second text in Donnchadh Albanach's manuscript, Bernard of Gordon's *Liber pronosticorum* (ff. 225ra1-257vaz), was begun on 24 August 1596, in 'Baile Cuad' in Upper Ossory, where Donnchadh Albanach was treating a member of the Mac Giolla Phádraig family, Fínghein son of Diarmaid an Bhealaigh, for 'cancer bolgach'.<sup>62</sup> Baile Cuad, where Donnchadh Albanach had written parts of Books 1 and 2 of the *Lilium medicine*, and which he describes as being on the border between Munster and Leinster, is evidently to be identified with Ballyquaid Glebe (par. Skirk, bar. Clandonagh) in the Queen's County.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup>The bulk of the work had evidently been transcribed by February 1597, see n. 53 above. It is possible that Book 4, undated except for its colophon, may have been largely written about that time also, the final lines of text and colophon being simply held over until May 1600.

<sup>62</sup>'An xxiiii. la do mí Agustus tionnsgnadh so do sgriobadh 7 a mBaile Cuad dhom ag leges cancir bolgaigh do bhi ar Finín mac Diarmaid an Bhealaigh', Adv. 73.1.22, f. 225rbz; the year of writing is inferred from the fact that text was completed on 9 October 1596 (see below); the text is otherwise undated.

<sup>63</sup>See n. 54 above. Identification courtesy of Prof. Pádraig Ó Macháin.

Having completed transcription of the second part of Bernard of Gordon's five-part treatise, he prayed God to cure his patient, presumably Fínghin: 'Alas, alas, o God, heal this patient'.<sup>64</sup> He evidently remained at Baile Cuad during the following weeks to attend Fínghin, for it is there, in the company of Fínghin and his sister Gráinne, that he wrote the colophon to the text on 9 October 1596.<sup>65</sup>

It appears that having completed Book 7 of the *Lilium medicine* on 10 February 1597, Donnchadh Albanach travelled home to Scotland, for, in a note immediately following Niall mac Iomhair's contemporaneous addition to this colophon (see below), he expressed a wish to return soon to Aghmacart, stating that it was Mac Dougal who had been detaining him for the past month, presumably in Dunollie.<sup>66</sup>

By 14 January 1599, however, he was back in Upper Ossory, where at 'Baile Mhic Cathail' (unidentified), he began transcribing the *Chirurgia* of Petrus de Argellata (ff. 259r1–329vz), the last of the three treatises in his manuscript.<sup>67</sup> Part of the text was written 'in the company of the daughter of Brian Ballach' at Daire Leac an Fiach (unidentified).<sup>68</sup> His final note in the treatise, which breaks off incomplete, was evidently written in the same place, and is dated '1599, the day before Easter Day'.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>64</sup> 'Uc uc a Dhia slanaigh an totur so', Adv. 73.1.22, f. 238ra30.

<sup>65</sup> F.I.N.I.S. Anno Domini 1596. Tairnig and sin Prognostica Bernardus Gordonius an .9. la do mí Octobereus maille re furtachd De a mBaile Cuthad dham 7 is iad so an drong do bhi ar lathair an crichnaighthi so .i. Fitnín mac Diarmaid [sic leg.; MS *diararmaid*] 7 Grainne ingen Diarmaid [sic leg.; MS *diararmaid*] 7 oglaoch o Laoighis 7 is iad so an drong nach fuil do lathair .i. Cathal O Concubhair 7 Iollinn 7 Domnall 7 Tadhg. Trocaire righ nimi dughdur an leabuirsi i. Bernardus Gordonius 7 dfer a curtha a nGaoidhelg .i. Cormac O Duinnlebbhi 7 dfer a sgribhta annso .i. Donnchadh Ua Concubuir. Ailim trocaire Dhé dom a[n]muin 7 a Dhe cuir me slán go Dunn Ollamh mas toil let', Adv. 73.1.22, f. 257va26–z.

Cathal Ó Conchubhair, otherwise unknown, may be a brother of Giolla Pádraig, son of Donnchadh Óg (see n. 57 above). Iollann, Domhnall and Tadhg were mentioned by Donnchadh Albanach in the colophon to Book 5 of the *Lilium medicine*, quoted above.

<sup>66</sup> 'Uch uch a Dia is fada leom ata me gan dul mur a bfuil Donnchadh oir is e Mac Dubhaill ata gom conmhail re mí 7 le toil Dia gearr go mbi me annsa chaoigedh Laoithnech mur a bfuil Grainne 7 Donnchadh 7 Fitnín 7 each uile o sin amac. Finit', Adv. 73.1.22, f. 224rb34–z; Bannerman, *Beatons*, 103.

<sup>67</sup> 'An ainm an athor 7 an mhic 7 an spirut naoimh tinnsnum an levorsa .i. Petrus de Ergelata ar Baile Mhic Cathail. Misi Donnchadh O Concubair do tinnsnus e an 14 la do mhi Januairius anno domini 1598', Black, 'Catalogue' (quoting Adv. 73.1.22, f. 259r, upper margin); Bannerman, *Beatons*, 103–4.

<sup>68</sup> 'Uch uch a Dhia foir orm anigh 7 me a bhfarraidh ingine Bhriain Bhallaig a nDaire Leac an Fiach', Adv. 73.1.22, f. 308rz. A note on the verso of this folio is dated 1 March [1599]: 'An tu Caitlín og 7 dar ndhoigh ní tu. Misi Donnchadh O Concubair an ced la don Mhart', Adv. 73.1.22, f. 308vz.

<sup>69</sup> '1599 an la roimh la Casga a mbaile Caitlín', Adv. 73.1.22, f. 329v, lower margin. Caitlín of this note is evidently the 'Caitlín daughter of Brian' addressed in a previous note in the manuscript

Following his return to Scotland, evidently some time after 30 May 1600, the date of Cathal's colophon to Book 4 of the *Lilium medicine*, Donnchadh Albanach succeeded his father as hereditary physician to Mac Dougall of Dunollie near Oban. He died on 13 February 1647 in his 76th year and was buried in the chapel of Campbell of Dunstaffnage.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to portraying the workings of the Aghmacart medical school, the notes in Donnchadh Albanach's manuscript are of interest for the occasional glimpses they provide of political instability in Upper Ossory during the Nine Years War (1594–1603). Thus, in the colophon to Book 7 of the *Lilium medicine*, written on 10 February 1597, having thanked Cathal mac Coinn for his help, Donnchadh Albanach referred to the 'great war' going on in Ireland at the time, a conflict in which Mac Giolla Phádraig dissidents, the sons of Seán, a half-brother of Fínghin's, had allied themselves with the Wicklow leader, Fiacha (mac Aodha) Ó Broin (d. May 1597) and his nephew, Uaithne (mac Ruaidhrí Óg) Ó Mórdha (d. 1600), the chief of the O'Mores of Laois, in opposing English government policies; they, together with many other nobles, were 'doing harm and making war against the queen'. Among those joined in rebellion with them were Piers (d. 1597) and James (d. 1597) Butler, sons of Sir Edmund Butler ('Éamonn an Chalaídh') (d. 1602) of Cloghgrenan, Co. Carlow, who were in revolt against their uncle, Thomas Butler, the tenth Earl of Ormond (d. 1614).<sup>71</sup>

Immediately following Donnchadh Albanach's note, an anonymous scribe, who has been identified by Ronald Black as Niall Mac Iomhair, put pen to paper to record his regret at another contemporary Ossory conflict, that in which the

('Is olc do riaghail tu so a Chaitlín og ingen Briai<n>', f. 316r, upper margin), her father Brian, being, presumably, Brian Ballach of 'Daire Leac an Fiach'; Bannerman, *Beatons*, 103–4. The text of the *Chirurgia* breaks off with Adv. 73.1.22, f. 329, at a point corresponding to RIA MS 474 (24 P 26), p. 333.26.

<sup>70</sup> For the date of his birth (Adv. 73.1.22, f. 257vb5–10), a manuscript written under his supervision (Adv. 72.2.10 (Gaelic MS LX)), his death and place of burial (Adv. 73.1.22, f. 257vb27–33), and the subsequent ownership of Adv. 73.1.22, see Bannerman, *Beatons*, 98–100, 146–7.

<sup>71</sup> '7 fos is mor an cogadh ata a nErinn an tan so oir ata Fiachtha mac Aodh 7 mac Ruthraigh Oig 7 Domnall mac Uaidhne 7 clann iShethain Meic Giolla fhuPatrig 7 moran ele do daoine uiaisle mar riú sin ag denamh uile 7 cogaidh an adaidh na ban righain 7 clann Edmuinn an Chala amuigh ar Iarla Uruin', Adv. 73.1.22, f. 224rb9–15. For the 'Mac Shane MacGiollapadraigs of Ballygelin', their relationship with Fínghin, and the gradual fragmentation of the Mac Giolla Phádraig dynasty at this period, see Edwards, 'The MacGiollapadraigs', 349–53; Carrigan, *History and antiquities I*, introduction, 87–95. For the conflict between Piers (executed at Thurles in late May or early June 1597) and James (killed in March 1597), the sons of Sir Edmund Butler of Cloghgrenan, Co. Carlow, and Thomas, tenth Earl of Ormond, see John O'Donovan (ed.), *Annala Ríoghachta Éireann, Annals of the kingdom of Ireland, by the Four Masters, from the earliest period to the year 1616 I–VII* (2nd ed., Dublin 1856) [henceforth *AFM*], VI, 2006 s.a. 1596; David Edwards, *The Ormond lordship in County Kilkenny, 1515–1642: the rise and fall of Butler feudal power* (Dublin 2003) 248–62.



Mac Caisín kindred were vying with Donnchadh Óg regarding the post of official physician (*olluntacht*) to Mac Giolla Phádraig. In Niall's opinion, the Mac Caisín contention was unjustified, for they themselves were insufficiently skilled to be appointed to such a position. To what extent Niall was a neutral witness is unclear, but it is of interest that it seems to be on account of a perceived lack of skill in practice – 'they are not skilled craftsmen' – that he condemns Cíne Caisín. Proficiency in practice, rather than academic merit, was evidently the hallmark of an *ollamh*. Returning to the principal war in Ireland at the time, Niall recorded that its leader was Aodh Ó Néill (d. 1616), and prayed for long life for both Aodh and himself.<sup>72</sup>

The name of Aodh Ó Néill appears in the manuscript again some two years later, when, in the early months of 1599, a son of his, Conn (d. 1601), visited Leinster and Munster in order to ascertain the loyalty of his father's allies and strengthen them in their enterprise.<sup>73</sup> His visit occasioned the following comment by Donnchadh Albanach: 'Alas, o God, Ossory has been greatly destroyed by Ó Néill's son. I am Donnchadh'.<sup>74</sup>

### Cathal Ó Duinnshléibhe, 1592–3

The final member of the Aghmacart team of physicians discussed here is Cathal Ó Duinnshléibhe, of whose scribal activities prior to his collaboration with Donnchadh Albanach in Adv. 73.1.22 a good deal is known.

The earliest dated occurrence of his hand is in a copy of an anonymous Irish translation of the *Dispensatorium* of the German physician and botanist, Valerius Cordus (1515–44), which is found in TCD MS 1437 (pp. 1.1–147.12), a copy that

<sup>72</sup>'Et farior sgeula is measa leam no gac sgeula 7 cogadh is measa liom no gac cogadh .i. cogadh Chionadh Chaisín le Donnchadh O Concabhair fa olluntacht [corrected from olluntacht] Osraighe Meic a Ghiolla Padruig 7 ata an eogair acsan go bhíos duine air an abhar nac maith an taois ealadhan iad [thall na cancelled] 7 nac coir ollamh do ghairm don duine bhios mur sin 7 tuilledh ele sgeula diph ar in ecogadh só .i. gurub e Ó Neill mur ata Aodh mac an Fir Dorcha meic Cuinn meic Cuinn meic Enrí meic Eoghain meic Neill Óig meic Neill Mhoir is ceannbhurt air an gcogadh so na hErend 7 go bhíos damhsa ní [g cancelled] cogadh gan cosnamh sin an fad bhaifios an tuaithe catha 7 an tairseóir iorghal? ile] 7 an lamh laidir 7 an cleith bearna <.i.> Aodh O Neill mac an Fir Dhorcha 7 gur fada b<uan> an fer sin 7 misi fen maill fris. Anno Dom[i]ni .1596.', Adv. 73.1.22, f. 224rb16–34.

<sup>73</sup>'One of O'Neill's sons, namely, Con, the son of Hugh, son of Ferdorcha, son of Con Bacagh, went, in the month of January, on a visit among the friends and warlike confederates of his father in Leinster and Munster, to ascertain who they were that were firm in their friendship and promises to O'Neill and the Irish. He remained in those territories during the greater part of the Spring, obtaining provisions for his soldiers, and confirming them in the war in which they were [engaged]', *AFM* VI, 2094 s.a. 1599; cf. Edwards, *Ormond lordship*, 254.

<sup>74</sup>'Uch a Dhia is mor ata Osraidh arna milledh le mac Í Neill. Misi Donnchadh', Adv. 73.1.22, f. 327vz.

was written for one Aodh, by a number of scribes, one of whom was Cathal, who transcribed a considerable portion of the text, and wrote the colophon, at an unspecified location, on 6 November 1592.<sup>75</sup>

Though no place of writing is cited in TCD MS 1437, the occurrence in the manuscript of the obit of Philip Grace (3 November 1592), in Cathal's hand, connects it to Ossory.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, if the 'Mairgreg ingen Donnchaidh' addressed in the manuscript (p. 32.z), by an anonymous scribe, be identified with Mairghréag, the daughter of Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair who is mentioned by Cathal in RIA MS 449 (see below), then clearly the manuscript originated in the Ó Conchubhair medical school at Aghmacart.<sup>77</sup>

On the same day that he wrote the colophon to Cordus's *Dispensatorium*, 6 November 1592, Cathal completed transcription of another tract, the treatise on health regimen that occurs in G 453, ff. 56r1–67r9, a text of which he was principal scribe (ff. 58r1–67r9), and which was written, at an unspecified location, for Tadhg Mac Caisín, the Ossory physician for whom G 453, the work of several scribes, was written.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>75</sup>'FINIS. Anno Domini .1592. In .6. lá do November [corrected from Nomember]. Sin duit a Aódh maille re bennachtain do companaigh', TCD MS 1437, p. 147.11–12. Notes addressed to Aodh occur *ibid.*, pp. 11az, 58.z and 110.z; Aodh's ownership of this section of the manuscript ('leabar Aodha so') is recorded in a line-filler *ibid.*, p. 14.y. For a description of TCD MS 1437, see T. K. Abbott and E. J. Gwynn, *Catalogue of the Irish manuscripts in the library of Trinity College, Dublin* (Dublin 1921) 317.

<sup>76</sup>'An .3. la do November aniudh 7 is e in la sin fuair Pilip Gras mac Seaaín bas. Anno Domini .1592', TCD MS 1437, p. 99.z.

<sup>77</sup>'A Mairgreg ingen Donnchaidh is lem duit gan srang do denamh dar gcoler 7 gur mait uait a denamh', TCD MS 1437, p. 32.z.

<sup>78</sup>'F.I.N.I.S. Anno Domini .1592. in .6. la do November. Sin duit a Thaidhg maille re bennachtain', G 453, f. 67r8–9. For the contents of G 453, scribal addresses to Tadhg in the manuscript, and the extent of Tadhg's own hand therein, see Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue* X, 33–9. For the Mac Caisín medical family, see n. 8 above. A 'Teige M'Cassen, of Kildelgen' is listed among the followers of Fíngin Mac Giolla Phádraig and his sons in a fiant of 1601 (*Irish fiants* III, § 6551); while one may speculate that Tadhg of this fiant is to be identified with Tadhg of G 453, no profession is cited for Tadhg of the fiant; 'Gillpatrick m'Shane M'Cassen, of Derryn, chirurgeon' of the same fiant is presumably to be identified with 'Gillpatrick m'Shane M'Cassen Georchyon [= chirurgeon; Carrigan, *History and antiquities* II, 52], of Ballybrowgh [= Ballybrophy, Co. Laois (Carrigan, *ibid.*)]', cited in a fiant of the following year, 1602, *Irish fiants* III, § 6733. With regard to Ballybrophy as a location for a Mac Caisín physician, it may be noted that it was 'a mBaile I Bhrodaigh', presumably Ballybrophy, Co. Laois, that the colophon to the text that is found in G 453, ff. 9r1–43v9 – a copy of an anonymous Irish translation of Nicolaus Leonicensus's version of the Aphorisms of Hippocrates – was written in 1592; Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue* X, 35–6.



In January 1592/3, Cathal transcribed three further treatises for the Mac Caisín manuscript: (i) a translation of a commentary on the *Liber prognosticorum* of Hippocrates (G 453, ff. 67r10–88r15), which is dated 11 January 1592 (f. 85vz);<sup>79</sup> (ii) a rendering of the *Carmina de urinarum iudiciis* of the French physician, Aegidius Corboliensis (c.1140–c.1224) (ff. 88r16–101r2), which he completed on 23 January 1592/3, and followed with an accompanying table of urines (f. 101v1–20); and lastly, (iii) a translation of Aegidius's *De pulsibus* (ff. 101v21–106r18), which is undated.<sup>80</sup>

It was evidently in the closing days of January 1592/3 that he began to transcribe the last of his texts in this Mac Caisín manuscript, a translation of the *Aphorismi* of Johannes Damascenus (*al. Mesue*, d. 857). As it stands, this text (G 453, ff. 106r19–109vz) breaks off incomplete, but, fortunately, it can be shown now that six of the some nine leaves that are missing from G 453 at this point, form part (ff. 3–8) of British Library MS Egerton 159, a manuscript that was compiled for, and for the most part written by, the Ossory physician, Tadhg Mac Caisín.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, the Egerton 159 leaves, containing (ff. 3r1–7r16), in Cathal's hand, the concluding portion of the *Aphorismi*, also contain his colophon to the text, which he wrote at an unspecified location, on 30 January 1592/3.<sup>82</sup> This colophon, which sheds an interesting light on his medical career, has been translated by O'Grady as follows:

*Finis. A.D. 1592. On the 30th day of the month of January this scrap of the latter part of the book was written; and my dad William it was that dictated it to me. Upon whom and upon myself God have mercy. There's for thee, with a blessing, Teigue Mac Cashin.*<sup>83</sup> ('F.I.N.I.S. anno domini .1592. an .30. la do mhi Ianuairus do sgriobadh in becan sin do deredh in lebuir 7 mo dhaíd Uilliam do bhí aga thabhairt dam 7 co ndingnadh Dia trocaire air fein

<sup>79</sup>Given that Cathal's colophon in G 453, f. 67r8–9, is dated 6 November 1592, and that this text, which immediately follows it, is dated January 1592, he was evidently taking the year Old Style.

<sup>80</sup>Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue* X, 38–9; Cathal's hand is hand '(i)', *ibid.*; for '58v', *ibid.*, p. 34.4, leg. '58r'.

<sup>81</sup>For a description of Eg. 159, see Standish Hayes O'Grady and Robin Flower, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the British Museum I–III* (London 1926, 1953) I, 280–85.

<sup>82</sup>The text of Damascenus's *Aphorismi*, continuing from G 453, f. 109v, occurs in Eg. 159, ff. 3–5, 6r1–7r16 (followed by colophon, f. 7r16–20), there being a lacuna of approximately three leaves between Eg. 159, ff. 5 and 6, a lacuna which corresponds to G 455, pp. 179.12–180.2, 169–170, 131–2, 219.1–7 (for order of leaves in this part of G 455, see Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue* X, 44.40–41, and note that the question mark *ibid.*, p. 44.41 is otiose, there being no chasm between G 455, pp. 170 and 131). For the texts contained in Eg. 159, ff. 7r21–8v15, 8v16–23, 8v24–2 (which are not in the same hand as that in Eg. 159, ff. 3r1–7r20), see O'Grady and Flower, *Catalogue* I, 282–3 § 3.

<sup>83</sup>O'Grady and Flower, *Catalogue* I, 282.

*agus ormsa. Sin duit maille re bennachtain a Thaidhg Mic Caisín*', Eg. 159, f. 7r16–20.)

As already noted, Donnchadh Albanach, when thanking Cathal for his help, referred to him as 'Cathall mac Cuinn' (Adv. 73.1.22, f. 224rb8). Uilliam, then, was evidently Cathal's foster-father, and, from the fact that he was dictating to his son a medical text which comprised a series of Latin aphorisms with Irish translation, it must be inferred that Uilliam, like his son, was learned in Latin, and a professional physician. Unfortunately, his surname is unknown; he is perhaps to be identified with the Uilliam Ó Fionghaine who is addressed by Cathal in a line-filler in RIA MS 449, and in a colophon to an acephalous text in G 455.<sup>84</sup>

Cathal's family name, indicates, of course, that he was a member of the Uí Dhuinnshléibhe, a kindred who originated in Ulster, and achieved renown as hereditary physicians to the O'Donnells of Tír Chonaill.<sup>85</sup> Perhaps, then, he was not a native of Ossory. It is clear from his extant manuscripts, however, that already by 1592, he was an established and industrious figure amongst the medical fraternity of Upper Ossory, participating in the writing of manuscripts that were variously associated with the lordship's two principal physician kindreds, Uí Chonchubhair and Mic Caisín.<sup>86</sup>

#### RIA MS 449: an Aghmacart medical miscellany

The details of Cathal's career in the years immediately following his colophon of 30 January 1592/3 are unknown. By May 1596, however, he was closely associated with the Ó Conchubhair school of Aghmacart, as is apparent from a colophon he wrote that month (see below) in RIA MS 449, a rich and varied miscellany of medical texts, of which he was principal scribe, and which he wrote, evidently for his

<sup>84</sup>'Slán duit a Uilliam I Fhingaini', RIA MS 449, f. 11r; 'Sin duit a Uilliam I Fionguine maille re bennachtain', G 455, p. 99.4. Uilliam Ó Fionghaine of Cathal's salutations is evidently to be identified with the scribe of that name who wrote and signed ('Misi Uilliam O Finghuine') a series of Latin aphorisms with Irish translation in G 455, p. 97.16–24 (Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue* X, 43). He is, however, to be distinguished from the scribe of the same name whose signature occurs in the fifteenth-century vellum medical manuscript, TCD MS 1343 ('FINIT AMEN. Uilliam O Fingaine qui sg[r]i[bs]id', *ibid.*, p. 113.13). Notes by Cathal to one 'Uilliam', with no surname specified, occur in TCD MS 1437, p. 6.z, and in G 453, f. 87r, lower margin. For the origins of the Uí Fhionnghuine, see Tomás Ó Concheanainn, 'The Irish astronomical tract in RIA B II 1', *Celtica* 11 (1976) 158–167: 158 n. 6.

<sup>85</sup>Edward Mac Lysaght, *Irish families: their names, arms and origins* (Dublin 1957) 118–9; James Carney, 'De scriptoribus Hibernicis', *Celtica* 1 (1946) 86–110: 104; Bannerman, *Beatons*, 27–8.

<sup>86</sup>For Cathal's hand in G 455, see Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue* X, 41, 43, 44 (for '139–46', *ibid.*, p. 41.x, leg. '139–44'); for Cathal's hand in RIA MS 467, a collection of medical fragments, see *ibid.*, 41, and *eadem*, *Catalogue* I, 94.

own use, in various locations in Upper Ossory – Tintore, Ballykeely, Kilbrackan, Aghmacart, Addergoole, Aharney – on various dates between 1596 and 1611.<sup>87</sup>

Because Aghmacart is cited in RIA MS 449 as a place of writing in May 1596, and because it is in the company of Donnchadh Óg, at Addergoole, on 22 June 1610, that Cathal wrote the colophon to the manuscript's principal text, it may be assumed that Cathal was in continuous association with the Ó Conchubhair school throughout this period, and, as we have seen, the evidence of Adv. 73.1.22 supports this; thus, though not all of the miscellany's texts were transcribed at Aghmacart itself, some being written when he was abroad on business or visiting patients, it is as a physician of the school, and as a colleague of Donnchadh Óg's, that he compiled it. The four texts in the collection that have stated associations with Aghmacart will be briefly noted here.<sup>88</sup>

At some time late in the Spring of 1596, Cathal began transcribing the commentary on the *Liber prognosticorum* of Hippocrates that occurs in RIA MS 449, ff. 41r1–56r11, noting on f. 47 of the manuscript: 'today is the last day of Spring. Anno Domini 1596'.<sup>89</sup> On 13 May he reached the end of the text, and at Aghmacart, in the company of Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair, he wrote the following colophon:

*Finis. Anno Domini 1596, on the 13th of May. I am in Aghmacart now in the company of Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair. And it is easy for me now to be sad for my friend and my companion has left me, i.e. Mairghréag, daughter of Donnchadh, and upon my word I don't know what I shall do without her from now on.* ('Finis anno Domini .1596. an .13. la do Maius a nAchaidh Mhic Airt damh an tansa a bfochair Dhonnchaidh Oig Í Chonchubhair 7 is urusa dhamh anois bheth dobrónach oir adime mo charaid 7 mo chumpanach uaimh .i. Mairghrég inghen Donnchadh 7 dar an leabhar ní fes dam créd do dhén ina hégmuis fesda', f. 56r7–11.)

<sup>87</sup> Wulff and Mulchrone, *Catalogue* X, 1191–4. For Tintore, not cited *ibid.*, see RIA MS 449, ff. 7r ('Is fuar an lá a tTig an Tuair'), and 7vz ('A tTigh an Tuair dhamh in tan sa a bfochair Thomáis batlaig mhic Phiarais'); for dates not cited *ibid.*, see RIA MS 449, ff. 33vz ('An .9. la do Maius .1597.'), 35vz ('A mBaile I Cheilli dhamh 7 fer in bhaili ina luighi a bfiabrus. Aoini na céd timper [?] .1597.'), 47vz (see n. 89 below), and 65r ('Is fuar gaotmair in lá oidhce Fél Michil .1602.'). The location cited in the following entry is unidentified: 'A seomra na mbratur dhamh an tansa oidhche Fheil Sen Seann .1597.', *ibid.*, f. 23vz.

<sup>88</sup> A number of the colophons in RIA MS 449 have been published, with English translation, in W. Wulff, 'On the qualitees, maners, and kunnyng of a surgean etc.', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 18 (1930) 249–86.

<sup>89</sup> 'Aniudh an la déghinach don errach anno Domini .1596.', f. 47vz.

Of Mairghréag, daughter of Donnchadh Óg, and sister to Giolla Pádraig, nothing further is known.<sup>90</sup>

Immediately following this colophon, Cathal began transcription of the Irish translation of the *Isagoge* of Johannitius (RIA MS 449, ff. 56r12–61r2). The *Isagoge*, an eleventh-century Latin translation of an introduction to Galenic medicine written in Arabic by Hunayn ibn Ishaq (Johannitius, d. c.873), was one of the core texts of the medical school curriculum in medieval Europe. The name of its Irish translator is not recorded. As Cathal's copy of the work, the only one extant, was completed at Aghmacart on 22 May 1596, evidently less than a fortnight after he had started it, it may be assumed that it was in the school there that its transcription took place. The turbulent political atmosphere in which he and his colleagues worked is reflected in the colophon to the text in which he refers to reports of the battle of Stradbally Bridge, which had taken place three days previously (19 May), and in which Alexander Cosby of Stradbally, and his son Francis, had been slain by Uaithne (son of Ruaidhrí) Ó Mordha (d. 1600), the chieftain of Laois.<sup>91</sup>

The longest text in Cathal's miscellany is a copy of an Irish translation of Gentilis de Fulgineo's (d. 1348) commentary on the *Carmina de urinarum iudiciis* of Aegidius Corboliensis (RIA MS 449, ff. 74r–122r), a text whose transcription was well advanced by 10 June 1610, when Cathal recorded that Brian Mac Giolla

<sup>90</sup> On the basis of this colophon it has been inferred that Cathal was married to Mairghréag, and was therefore son-in-law to Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair: Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue* I, 94; *eadem*, *Catalogue* X, 34, 41.

<sup>91</sup> FINIS. Anno Domini .1596. In .22. la do Maius a nAchaidh Mhic Airt 7 isin aimsir cedna adéridh brisclec eder Uaithni mac Ruraighi 1 Mhorrda 7 Maighistir Framhas 7 proteccion ag Uaithni on Chomhuirli 7 on nGuisdis 7 mur do bhí an donus ar Mhaighistir Framhas do thuit se ann 7 madh fíor do lucht a eoluis ní mór in sgél dEirinncaibh sin 7 ata dres mor do Ghallaibh mur an cedna 7 ma táid no muna bfuilid dar ndoigh ata Uaithni amhlaidh ní misdi leis a mharbadh 7 aitrister cur thuit Seóirsi mac Semuis an la sin 7 madh fíor is mór in sgél [sin cancelled] diluna sin oir do bhí sé foghlumtha usal macánta. [7 ní brég gur thuit Seóirsi added later in lower margin], RIA MS 449, f. 61r25–z [= Wulff, 'On the qualitees', 251 n. 1]. 'Seóirsi mac Semuis' is otherwise unidentified.

Two of the Cosby family were killed in the battle of Stradbally Bridge: Alexander Cosby, sheriff of Queen's county, and his eldest son, Francis. Alexander's own father, Francis Cosby, had been slain in the battle of Glenmalur in 1580. 'Maighistir Framhas' of Cathal's colophon, though properly an appellation of Alexander's father, seems to refer to Alexander himself; it is unlikely to refer to Francis, Alexander's son, who was not a principal in the conflict. For details of the battle of Stradbally Bridge, see AFM VI, 2006 s.a. 1596. (Incidentally, 'Framhas' of Cathal's colophon suggests that 'Frauus' in the annalists' appellation of Alexander Cosby's father ('Cosbi mac maighistir frauus a ainm', '[Alexander] Cosby, the son of Master Frauus') is not an error of transcription for 'Francis', as it is taken to be, *ibid.*, p. 2007, n. e; Alexander's father is called 'Maighistir fransis' ('Master Francis') at AFM V, 1546 s.a. 1557, and 'Maighistir frans' ('Master Frans'), at AFM V, 1738 s.a. 1580 (cf. *ibid.*, note d).) For the Cosby family, see Ivan Cosby, 'The English settlers in Queen's county, 1570–1603', in Lane and Nolan, *Laois*, 283–325: 286–7, 299–302, *et passim*.

Phádraig would say his first Mass the following day.<sup>92</sup> Brian a descendant of the ruling family of Upper Ossory, and an accomplished poet, was to lead a long and illustrious life as a priest, being appointed Vicar General of the diocese of Ossory in 1651, and Vicar Apostolic in 1652. He is evidently to be identified with the Ossory priest of the same name whose beheading by Cromwellians was recorded in contemporary sources.<sup>93</sup> Cathal finished the commentary on 22 June 1610, writing the colophon to it that day in Addergoole in the company of Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair:

*Finis. Anno Domini 1610, on the 22nd of June in Addergoole in the company of Donnchadh Óg Ó Conchubhair. May God have mercy on the soul of him who translated this into Irish, i.e. Séamas son of Gearóid Ó Fionghaine. ('Finis anno Domini .1610. in .22. la do Iunius a nEdargúil a bhfharradh Dhonncaidh Oig hÍ Conchubhuir co ndéna Dia grasa ar anmain an tí do cuir so a nGáoidilg .i. Sémus mac Geróid hl Fhiongaini', RIA MS 449, f. 122r31–3.)*

He concluded the colophon with a note (RIA MS 449, f. 122r34–z) recounting the devastation that had been wrought, during the previous week, in the country of the O'Mores, by Sir Henry Power, governor of Co. Laois, and its sherriff, Piggott.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>92</sup>'Dar náil is amaraic adéraidh Brian mac Toirrdelbaigh a ced aithfrinn in .10. [corrected from .9.] lá do Iunius .1610.', f. 102vz; Wulff and Mulchrone, *Catalogue* X, 1193.

<sup>93</sup>Carrigan, *History and antiquities* I, 113–4, II, 71; Thomas F. O'Rahilly (ed.), *Measgra dánta: miscellaneous Irish poems* I–II (Cork 1927), II, 136–9, 203–4; Seán Mac Airt (ed.), *Leabhar Branach: the Book of the O'Byrnes* (Dublin 1944) xiv–xv; Cuthbert Mhág Craith, 'Brian Mac Giolla Phádraig', *Celtica* 4 (1958) 103–205.

<sup>94</sup>'Et isin aimsir sin do críochnuighidh díbert 7 ruágan do cur ar a mairionn bío do Láioighis eder fer 7 mhnaoi 7 gharlac bec 7 mór dhíph 7 ata Sir Hénri Púr .i. uachturan Chunndae Láoisigh 7 sirriam na cunndae cédna .i. an Picédac le sechtmain aga sgrios 7 tógbaíl suas acu ara mbedh do mháoin [corrected from bhuidhín] tsháogalta san inadh ina bhfuighidis mar<t> no capall no caora [? d cancelled] no ní sa saogal da gcuid ina ccúndae féin 7 ata dlighi mar<?> agan mu<i> nntir sin cum crochda gac nduine acu ara mbérdís', RIA MS 449, f. 122r34–z [= Wulff, 'On the qualitees', 252 n. 1]. For Sir Henry Power, see Ivan Cosby 'The English settlers', 289, 295, 314, 317; for Sir Robert Piggott of Dysart, see *ibid.*, 284, 316–7; O'Hanlon, *History* I, 270–71.

Canon O'Hanlon (*History* II, 504) refers to a manuscript in the Royal Irish Academy, 'written, it is said, by one of the O'Moores exiled in Kerry from the land of Leix, of date June, 1610, which states that the banishment and extirpation of all the survivors of his sept – men, women, and children – was then finished. During a whole week the governor and sheriff of Leix had been employed in destroying the people remaining there, in seizing their cattle and all they possessed, while a savage order had been issued to hang any of them found in their ancient principality'; Canon O'Hanlon's reference is evidently to RIA MS 449.

Almost a year later, 20 June 1611, on the verso of the leaf on which he had recorded the destruction of Laois, Cathal began transcription of Donnchadh Óg's translation of Bertrucius's chapter on stretching and yawning.

Of Cathal's career after this date, or of that of Donnchadh Óg, his colleague, nothing further is known. It is in each other's company, as it were, that they disappear from view in 1611. Presumably, they both ended their days in Upper Ossory.

As to their patron and employer, Fínghin, Lord Baron of Upper Ossory, whose health regimen they had assiduously monitored over the years, he died, in his late seventies, on 3 February 1613.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>95</sup>William Carrigan, 'The wayside cross at Errill, Queen's County, and its inscriptions', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 54 (1924) 147–51. For Fínghin's political career and legacy, see Edwards, 'The MacGiollapadraigs', 349–61. I thank Dr Pádraig de Brún for assistance with various aspects of this article.